Chile in My Life *Michael Moffitt*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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TRB

from Washington ®
October 2, 1976

Canadian Schemes

Those irritating Canadians have come up with another of their crackpot notions. They think elections last too long. Their last election (1974) lasted two months and could be shortened, what with modern communications, transportation and all. Sixty days, they say, bores voters.

What an outrageous thought. Our election lasts a year or more. I was up slogging in the snow in New Hampshire with Reagan and Carter last winter and now there is still a month to go. As soon as it is over the mid-term congressional election starts, and after that, 1980. America is always electioneering.

We are proud of our system, of course. Infiltration of radical notions from Canada shocks us, and might sour relations. Who knows: some US newspaper might send an exploratory team up to Canada to examine their strange system. Slight chance; we are interested in Europe and Africa, not what happens next door; we're insulated by an unfortified border. Where nations build iron walls they take an avid interest in the other side. The US-Canadian relationship is so calm that we forget for years at a time that anybody is there. Then a strange thought breaks through like 60-day elections; normally we are protected by a kind of ozone layer of apathy.

There are other preposterous Canadian notions—one example—gun control. It isn't even an issue up there. There has always been federal regulation of firearms; to own a handgun practically takes an act of Parliament. It is an example of bureaucratic interference. By contrast, the 1969 staff report on "Firearms and Violence" of the Milton Eisenhower Commission on Crime estimated 40 million firearms loose in this country. There are more now.

Our affluent National Rifle Association, the most powerful single-issue lobby in Washington, is the first to tell you how valuable these guns are. If there were a domestic insurrection, say, or an invasion from Russia our citizenry could spring to arms—or to Saturday Night Specials, anyway—at a moment's notice. Those unregistered hand guns may send up the US murder rate a bit but, so what? That's better than government interference.

Canadians are nuts on other subjects, too. They have had health insurance for years (another example of state interference). Free enterprise isn't revered as it ought to be. The government owns air and rail lines and operates a communications channel. The government also registers voters at elections instead of leaving the initiative to the citizen. How bureaucratic can you get? All the European democracies follow the same practice as Canada; it is fortunate that at least one nation preserves private initiative; too many people vote anyway.

Canada's elections are short because everybody knows the leaders in advance; if Prime Minister Trudeau called one next week (which he could do) he would automatically run as head of the Liberal party against Joe Clark, leader of the Conservatives, with Edward Broadbent (a kind of third-party Gene McCarthy—but a Socialist) leading the New Democrats. No need of primaries in such a system where it's all arranged in advance.

An arrangement like that would convulse Washington and undermine professional politicians everywhere. Fortunately Americans haven't noticed it. "The institutional structure bequeathed to twentieth century America by the eighteenth century," as I quoted James Sundquist of Brookings last week, "is more complex than that of any other democratic country in the world." Exactly; we are proud of it. When some foreigner says wonderingly that his country couldn't possibly make the system work we blush modestly.

Elections as Lotteries

Take our election. It would last only 60 days in Canada because they know who the leaders are in advance and what they stand for; they have been in the Commons for years. How dull; they must feature issues, not personalities. Our sprightlier system has more adventure; nobody is quite sure what the parties stand for anyway, and the new President, when elected, won't be bound in any case. Jimmy Carter is still a stranger to many. We have the fun of taking a sporting chance; of inserting a ballot and pulling out a surprise package.

(What if the contest takes a year? We have to fill the papers up some way, don't we, and Gallup polls are more interesting than batting averages.)

There's an unfortunate defeatist tendency at present about our venerable system: the Hart Research Associates in a poll say that maybe 50 percent of the eligibles won't vote this November (70 million). Too boring, they say. (In 1974 three-fourths of Canadians voted.) Many of the prospective nonvoters seem to be waiting for a hero-type candidate; somebody with charisma, a man on horseback, say, a Mussolini. They are opting out of democracy.

Maybe the debates will turn them on. In any case we must guard the temporarily disaffected from radical notions from Canada. They challenge our institutions. Take debates, for example. Canada has nothing to compare with the brilliant Carter-Ford debate with its spectacular media coverage and public excitement. Under the drab Canadian system they bring the party leaders right on the floor of the House of Commons all the time and ask them questions. There sits Trudeau and there sits Clark, and they debate each other; naturally that takes all the excitement out of it; it shows how you can ruin something by making it commonplace.

Under a system like that, Nixon, as head of his party, would have been questioned about Watergate by his political opposition right on the floor; he would either have explained or been chucked out. Probably a Canadian Watergate couldn't happen.

The Canadian infiltration will continue and seems to be getting worse. Maybe our ozone shield of apathy to the North is being dissipated by aerosol squirts of discontent. Maybe the protection of an unfortified border is giving way. Should we fortify? It wouldn't cost much; Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is raising his request to $120 billion for FY 1978 ($112 billion last year) and fortification would amount to only three to five billion dollars. It would provide lots of employment, too. There's always one difficulty. Fortification can stop tanks; but ideas—who knows?

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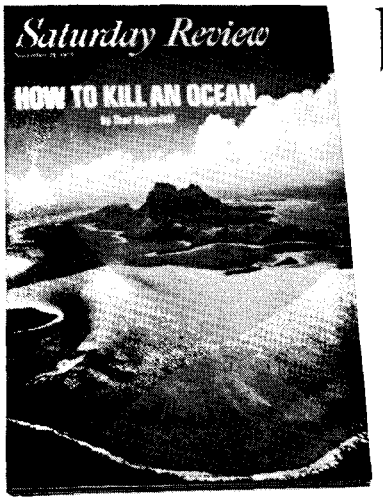

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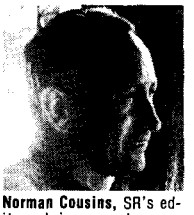

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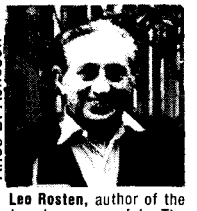

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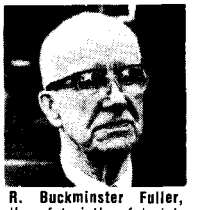

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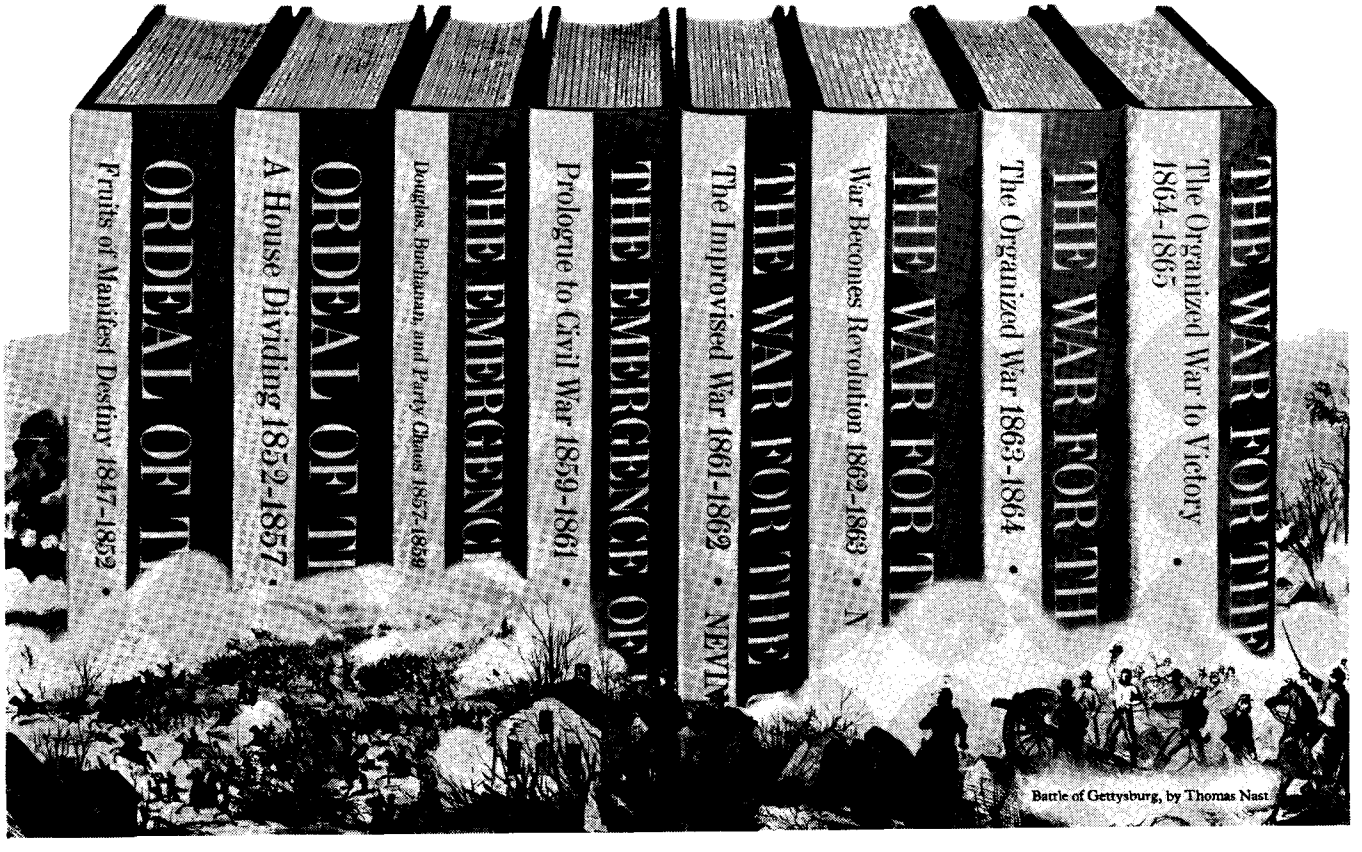

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Arms Peddling

When Congress adjourns in October, the Senate subcommittee investigating multinational companies is scheduled to go out of business. Its funds run out this fall, and unless its chairman, Sen. Frank Church (D, Idaho) steps in to save it, the subcommittee will have nothing to live on but its record. In addition to heading this subcommittee, Sen. Church will sit as the second-ranked Democrat on the full Foreign Relations Committee, to which the subcommittee reports. This puts him in line to take over when the present chairman—76-year-old Sen. John Sparkman (D, Ala.)—retires. (His term is up in 1978.) Church's seniority also gives him a say in the running of subcommittees, and some Senate staffers (not his own) say Church could continue the multinationals investigation if he wished. Church told his own staff that he would like to do that—or at least that he would like to create a permanent foreign affairs investigative body to do the same kind of work. But he hasn't asked for funds to keep the multinationals inquiry going, and he won't discuss his plans. (We called his office last week: no comment.) It would be a great loss if Church lets the subcommittee recede into the Capitol archives before its work is done.

In three years of digging, the subcommittee raked up a wealth of muck that no one else wanted to touch. In 1973 it took up the malodorous ITT affair, dissecting a case in which a US conglomerate discussed with the CIA ways to block the election of democratic socialist Salvador Allende Gossens to the presidency of Chile. In 1974 it examined the symbiotic relationship between OPEC governments and the major US oil companies—all of whom stood to gain from an increase in the price of oil. It also looked at the State Department's role in promoting price increases. Then in 1975 it began an inquiry into weapons sales to the Persian Gulf. This was a natural outgrowth of the earlier investigations, subcommittee counsel Jerome Levinson says, because the trail of the oil money led directly to arms sales.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have been spending their oil wealth at a furious pace on guns, missiles, fighter planes, tanks, airbases, bombs, pilot training schools and every kind of military gadgetry the US will sell. There's little we have refused them. Without looking for kickbacks, the subcommittee came across the widespread corruption that every news-watcher now knows about. The pattern was not con-

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fined to the Persian Gulf. The investigation of Mideast kickbacks led to Lockheed's payoffs, and that eventually led to Japan, rattling the Japanese government and causing the arrest of former premier Kakuei Tanaka. In Europe, it nearly removed Queen Juliana of the Netherlands from her Orange throne. With the complementary work on bribery done by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the inquiry touched most of America's important allies—France, Italy, West Germany and South Korea. It also touched our putative ally Saudi Arabia, which in this calendar year alone has contracted for more than $7.5 billion in weapons trade, nearly twice the amount it had purchased over the past 25 years. (This week Congress has the opportunity of cancelling a fraction of that sale, an additional stockpile of 650 Maverick TV-guided air-to-ground missiles and other such arms. Professor James R. Kurth of Swarthmore called the Mavericks "an exceptionally destabilizing weapon for the Middle East military balance . . . Saudi Arabia has the potential to become the weapons way-station or weapons warehouse of the Arab world." That's a scandal in itself.)

The Church subcommittee is now investigating the past sale of Grumman's F-14 fighter plane to Iran. The subcommittee set out to get a detailed story of how makers like Grumman peddle their wares abroad, and it has already done a creditable job of that. But its net also hauled in some other strange objects. One of these has to do with Henry Kissinger's role in forcing the Pentagon to sell Grumman planes to Iran in 1972. But first some details.

"From the point of view of selling the soap," Levinson says, "Grumman's campaign in Iran was brilliant." The F-14 is considered one of the most sophisticated weapons in the US arsenal, to be sold to foreigners only at the Pentagon's discretion. Yet Grumman made a sales pitch to Iran long before the Pentagon knew a deal was in the making. Grumman did this through the person of Colin Jupp. According to subcommittee records, this is how it was done: Jupp, who was employed by Grumman until 1974, had a friend named Colonel Cliff Mansfield in the US air force. He and Jupp were in the US military in Southeast Asia together during World War II. Mansfield, who worked as a Pentagon attaché in Moscow, had a friend named General Payrou, who was also assigned to Moscow as an official in the Iranian defense ministry. Payrou was on good terms with General Khatami, then chief of the Iranian air force. Through Jupp, Mansfield, Payrou and Khatami, Grumman made a pitch to the Iranian military, complete with briefings on the F-14's technical strengths. Though Grumman says it did not violate security regulations or any laws, it did give out enough information to whet the Iranians' appetite.

Meanwhile, Grumman hired some local sales talent—four Iranian brothers named Lavi. If the sale went through, the Lavi brothers were promised they would get a commission of up to $24 million. Unluckily for the Lavis, some outsiders learned of the deal, including the government of Iran, and things didn't work out as planned. Grumman is still a bit shaky on legal details, but last week a press spokesman said that only six million dollars of the commission has been paid, and Grumman doesn't intend to pay the rest. The six million dollars was divided among the Lavis, two other influential Iranian families (the Rashidians and the Fouladis), one Colonel Assari (retired) of the Iranian air force and an American named Dr. Albert Fuge, who has obscure business ties to former JFK aide Kenneth O'Donnell and old Kennedy friend Benjamin Smith, who kept Jack's Senate seat warm until Ted was ready to occupy it. Precisely what these people did to earn their commission is not clear, but we can assume it involved more than translating Parsi.

The skein is tangled, and Levinson regrets that he hasn't had more time to unravel it. Because its days may be numbered, the subcommittee staff feels pressed to move along and make public what it has in hand. Levinson fears that, in the rush, they may obscure the point these hearings were meant to demonstrate—that oil prices and weapons sales are inextricably linked in the Persian Gulf. Iran, the OPEC country that presses most vigorously for price increases, is preparing to buy not one, but two expensive new American weapons systems: the F-14 and the still unbuilt F-16, a plane that even the US air force doesn't have. Yet even today, Iran faces a growing national deficit because the Shah has committed himself to expanding all areas of the state economy—and particularly the military—faster than Iran's revenues will permit. When Iran falls behind on payments, which will happen, the Shah will have only one option: to raise the price of oil. Levinson believes that to push the Shah into buying F-14s and F-16s at this time is madness. It only insures that Iran will insist at the next OPEC meeting in December that oil prices go higher.

Kissinger's role in the arms deals is pervasive, and this could make the subcommittee's current inquiry its most controversial. It was Kissinger who stopped off in Iran with Richard Nixon on their return from the trip to Russia in May 1972 and made the first binding commitment to sell F-14s to the Shah. To accomplish this, Kissinger and Nixon elevated Iran to the status of a most trusted ally, akin to a NATO member. According to the Church committee staff, the Pentagon resisted this change of policy for a time. But at Kissinger's insistence, it carried out his decision. The subcommittee is trying to obtain the documents on this case, but so far the National Security Council has not given them up.

The subcommittee also stumbled onto an arms deal last month that is in progress right now. On the first day of hearings on the F-14, an official with inside knowledge of a proposed sale of F-16's to Iran dumped a file of documents in the committee offices and said, "You've got to stop this one." The staff hasn't in-

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Chile in My Life

Michael Moffitt *wrote this article within hours after the death of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt. The author is on the staff of the Institute for Policy Studies.*

Generally when people reach a certain level of prominence in society, they tend to pawn off lesser tasks to subordinates. Orlando Letelier—a former foreign minister, defense minister and ambassador—was not such a man. On Monday evening, September 21, we spent several hours literally placing commas and semicolons in a draft of an essay we had been writing. A few hours later, Orlando and my wife, Ronni Karpen Moffitt, were murdered by a bomb as we drove around Sheridan Circle in Washington.

I vividly recall the day that Orlando was taken prisoner—the same day his beloved President, Salvadore Allende Gossens, was killed in Moneda Palace, in Santiago, Chile. That day, September 11, 1973, one of Washington's typically beautiful autumn afternoons, turned dark as Good Friday always seemed to do when I was a child. Various news reports gave conflicting descriptions of what was going on in Chile at the time and it was not confirmed until later that the Allende government had been overthrown by Chilean generals who had pledged to uphold the constitution.

I also recall thinking that the coup in Chile would somehow be extraordinarily important in my life. Yesterday, I finally found out why.

The Chilean experience was a unique experiment, or "model" as the academicians phrase it. One of the few Third World countries with any semblance of constitutional rule, Chile under President Allende tried to establish socialism by peaceful means. Not that their reforms were anything new. On the contrary, President Allende merely put into practice ideas—redistribution of land, "Chileanization" of copper production and the establishment of real social welfare programs for the masses of people—that had often been proposed as a way of winning the votes of the poor, the intellectuals and the workers, but were always postponed and compromised to suit the powers-that-be.

Under President Allende, Chile had perhaps the most tolerant political system in the world. Allende tolerated the most savage and libelous attacks in the media and elsewhere—far less drove Nixon to move on his enemies—almost to the point of being politically naïve. This openness led to extraordinary advances in popular support for the Unidad Popular government. The UP was rare in Chilean history in that its popularity increased while it was in power.

But the entire Chilean political tradition has been systematically destroyed in the three years since the coup. Trade unions, unsympathetic newspapers and magazines, academic freedom and, most importantly, thousands of lives and hopes have been extinguished by the junta and its henchmen. In fighting their war against the "cancer of Marxism" they spread death to the patient, the people of Chile.

All of which brings me to the murder of Orlando Letelier. We may never know who planted the bomb in his car last Monday, just as we will never know who pulled the trigger on the late President Allende. The lawyers, administrators and professors will make their debating points and insist that the investigation proceed prudently. But in a very real sense these are of secondary importance.

The Nixon administration and the US intelligence community hated the Allende government. Private banks, foreign assistance agencies, international lending institutions, the highest officials of the US government and American corporations tried to make it impossible for Allende to govern. Likewise, the junta which now holds an iron clamp on Chilean society hated Orlando Letelier; indeed it was a fluke that he ever left the concentration camp of Dawson Island at all. He used to laugh at how stupid and clumsy they were to harass his family and friends, to try to destroy his reputation within Chile and drum up support for their barbarism. He said last week he thought the "moderates" had prevailed and that he was no longer in danger. Thus he went around the world tirelessly trying to inform anyone who would listen about the nature of the Santiago regime. He predicted that the junta would last "probably three more years," but that its life span would be considerably shortened if, first of all, the market price of copper remains low, and secondly, if all US government assistance is withdrawn.

The latter would be a fitting tribute to his life. For the reality is that the junta is responsible not only for the death of Chilean society and of one of its great diplomats, but for the death of my wife as well. Anyone who is interested knows that Washington is full of agents of DINA, the Chilean secret police. Did the directions come from Santiago, or the embassy on Massachusetts Avenue? If the investigation is not quashed for political reasons we may find out.

My wife and I loved Orlando Letelier because, like him, we believed that the abominable conditions in which the majority of the human race lives (especially, but not exclusively, in the Third World) are morally outrageous and politically insane. The struggle against these conditions is the legacy President Allende bequeathed to the world. Orlando Letelier and my wife accepted this legacy, and now they are dead. Millions of people will never forget Allende or them.

Michael Moffitt
September 22, 1976

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vestigated the case yet, but in many ways it looks like a repeat performance of the F-14 sale. One striking difference, however, is that in this case the US proposes to sell a weapon that hasn't been built. Even the US air force hasn't got an F-16, and we wonder what country will get the first lot that comes out of the factory. The Pentagon, it seems, must subsidize its suppliers—Grumman, Lockheed, General Dynamics *et al.*—by selling extra copies of their weapons to select friends around the world, especially oil-rich rulers like the Shah of Iran and the King of Saudi Arabia.

Almost eight months ago, the administration began what it promised would be a careful review of US policy on oil and arms sales in the Persian Gulf. It told Congress several times the report was on the way, that only the finishing touches were being made. Last week, it had the same story. If the report hasn't been written and the policy hasn't been spelled out, Levinson wonders, why is there such a rush to sell F-14s and F-16s and other heavy arms to the Shah? This and the Saudi matter are questions the multinationals subcommittee would try to answer if it survives into 1977.

The Catholic Defection

Jimmy Carter has a growing Catholic problem which could cost him the presidency. If present trends continue, the 1976 election will be the first national contest since scientific opinion polling started in 1935, perhaps the first presidential election ever in American history, in which Catholics have not been considerably more supportive of the Democratic nominee than Protestants.

The most recent national opinion survey, taken for NBC between September 16th and 19th, found Carter with a statistically insignificant lead of only one percent (44 to 43 percent) among registered Catholic voters. Evidence that Carter has lost the considerable Democratic advantage among this group, which he had in early polls, is not limited to this survey alone. Two recent state polls report the same phenomenon. An Illinois survey conducted for *The Chicago Tribune* indicated Ford was ahead 50 to 37 percent among Catholics in Richard Daley's state. According to a *Detroit News* study, the two candidates divided the Catholic electorate evenly 37 to 37 percent in Michigan. In predominantly Democratic and Catholic Massachusetts (remember: McGovern won there) *The Boston Globe* reported a poll taken in late August, when Ford was much weaker in the polls than now, which gave the President a favorable rating over Carter of 49 to 44 percent.

Carter's weakness among Catholics, a group that has invariably supplied victorious Democratic presidential nominees with a large part of their majority, has also brought about their defection from the registered electorate as a whole. The NBC poll found the gap between the two candidates, which was well over 30 percent following the Democratic convention, is now smaller than at any time since April; 46 percent for Carter to 41 percent for Ford. If probable voters, as distinct from registered ones, are taken into consideration, Ford's deficit may be even less, for all the polls agree that 1976 is a very low-interest election, and that a quarter or more of registered voters will probably not go to the polls. Since non-voters tend to come heavily from less privileged, darker and younger Democratic ranks, the difference in popularity between the two nominees among those most likely to vote suggested by the latest NBC poll was probably around three percent.

Religious affiliation and ethnic background continue to affect the way people vote. Carter does best with traditionally Democratic and liberal Jews, with over a two-and-one-half to one lead among them. His fellow Baptists, who comprise a quarter of the entire electorate, give him 61 percent to the President's 26, according to NBC's poll. Ford, in turn, leads by well over two-to-one among Presbyterians and Episcopalians, while he is slightly behind among Methodists and Lutherans.

Looking at the same data in ethnic terms, Ford appears well in the lead among voters of Scottish and English ancestry (64 to 28 percent). He has considerable strength among some groups of white ethnics. Thus, he is ahead by 48 to 32 percent among Italians, by 54 to 30 among those of German descent, and by 67 to 23 among Scandinavians. Voters of Irish ancestry, a category which includes almost as many Protestants as Catholics, are easily divided 43 for Ford and 42 for Carter.

Carter still has an overwhelming lead among the two prototypical Democratic minority groups, blacks and Jews, 74 to 11 among the former and 60 to 23 with the latter. Without black and Jewish backing, the Georgian would in fact trail the President among all registered voters. Other pro-Democratic ethnic groups include Slavs (47-41 percent for Carter) and Hispanic-Americans, too small a segment of the registered electorate for a reliable estimate in an opinion poll.

The decline in Carter's support among Catholics and some other white ethnic groups is reflected in the distribution of regional strength. Two weeks ago, Carter continued to hold his overwhelming advantage reported in all earlier polls in the South (56-34 percent) and to lead by a lesser margin (47 to 43 percent) in what has become in recent years the most Democratic region, New England. Ford was in the lead, however, in the densely populated middle Atlantic (47 to 44 percent) and the Midwest industrial states (47-36), while the two candidates were about even (42 for Carter and 41 for Ford) in the West.

What accounts for the Catholic defection? There is no reliable answer to this question, particularly since no

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publicly available opinion poll has focused on this issue. We know from surveys taken during the primary that Jimmy Carter's main support came from black and white Protestants. Historically victims of bigotry they identify with Southern Protestantism, the largely urban and non-southern Catholics and Jews seemingly found his evangelical religion, his accent and his cultural style alien to their experience and backed his rivals for the nomination. Following the New York convention, the majority of Catholics and Jews supported him, but pollsters recorded that Carter voters in these groups expressed many more reservations about their choice than did Carter's Protestant backers. Prominent Catholic intellectuals such as Michael Novak and Andrew Greeley complained in print following the convention that the Carter campaign devoted considerable efforts to remedying its relations with recalcitrant Jews and liberals, but largely ignored Catholics.

During August and September, Carter's overwhelming lead in the polls disappeared rapidly. And as various Carter advisers have noted, much of the decline appeared related to a shift in his image from the moderate conservative one of the primary campaign to a much more liberal one. This was a deliberate effort by Carter to woo those who had backed his liberal pre-nomination opponents. Carter, the pollsters tell us, has been losing support among people who reject the policies and behavior they associate with liberalism, who hold liberals responsible for what they view as a breakdown in respect for traditional values in areas such as sex relations, law and order, parental and school authority, use of drugs, patriotism, and the emphasis on self-reliance and work rather than welfare. Such social attitudes may be found, of course, among economically conservative Republicans and businessmen, few of whom were ever for Carter. They are also present, however, among a large proportion of lower middle class Catholic white ethnics. Most of them still call themselves Democrats, meaning by this that they feel positively about government action to avoid unemployment, to provide adequate pensions and to insure against the cost of ill-health. But a large proportion of the same people increasingly describe their politics as moderate or conservative, reflecting their distaste for many of the social changes of the 1960s. Nationally, the polls agree that self-described Democrats outnumber Republicans by about 45 to 20 percent, but that self-described conservatives are much more numerous than liberals. A recent *New York Times*-CBS survey reported 32 percent of those interviewed called themselves conservative (seven "very conservative"), 23 percent liberal (three "very liberal") and 38 percent moderate.

Somehow Jimmy Carter, in his effort to unify the Democratic party during and after the New York convention, became identified in the eyes of many socially conservative Democrats—many of whom are Catholics and were already troubled by his ways and his religion—as a partisan of permissive liberalism. As one Carter strategist commented after looking at some of Carter's own polling results, many Catholics see him as another George McGovern. Carter's self-conscious efforts to re-position himself as a conservative may fortify their distrust rather than weaken it. What his *Playboy* remarks on adultery and lust will do is anybody's guess.

Abortion is not the issue that bothers the social conservatives. The pollsters agree that very few voters regard abortion as a relevant presidential election issue. Most of those who oppose legalized abortion recognize that the results of the presidential race are not likely to have any effect on abortion. But the seizure of the issue by a small dedicated minority which has succeeded in gaining considerable publicity, frequent coverage on the TV news showing Catholic-based action groups disrupting Carter meetings and, in turn, being pushed around by police and secret service agents, has made Carter's relations with Catholics an issue.

Carter's relatively liberal image, his cultural and religious style, the media emphasis on problematic relationships with Catholics and his talk with the bishops have severely undermined his support among Catholics and consequently his chances for the election. John F. Kennedy was able to overcome enough of the Protestant fear of Catholics to squeak through to victory in 1960. Jimmy Carter, ironically, faces an almost identical problem in reverse this fall. His may be the more difficult task, for Kennedy only had to tackle the residual beliefs in a Rome-based conspiracy; Carter must overcome vague feelings of distaste by members of one religious grouping for the different traditional values of another, linked to quite different concerns that identify secular liberalism with a challenge to old-time familial, religious and patriotic beliefs.

Seymour Martin Lipset

Mr. Lipset is professor of political science at Stanford University.

Memo to Jimmy Carter

During the past month, Stuart Eizenstat, the issues and policy director of your campaign, gave interviews to me and to John Osborne, Senior Editor of this magazine. In a talk with Osborne, Eizenstat said, "The thing that gets me about *The New Republic*, and I think I can say this since I've subscribed to the magazine for 12 years, is that they are so hard on guys that are progressive that they end up making things easy for the guys that are the conservatives."

Some of our readers think that Eizenstat's comment accurately depicts our treatment of your candidacy, and they are probably right. *The New Republic* is a journal of

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opinion, and we have printed a wide spectrum of views on Jimmy Carter—from Reg Murphy on the one hand, whom you once called an "enemy," to Robert Coles (on your roots), E. Brooks Holifield (on your religion) and Simon Lazarus and Harry Huge (on your liberalism). Editorially we were often critical during the primary period, and since the convention, we have been watchful and cautious. After the first two weeks of your campaign, and before the first debate, we remain so, and I think we should tell you why. I don't think it has been to vindicate our early skepticism and detachment.

When you left Plains after about six weeks of softball and expert briefings, you exuded the confidence of a man at the head of a unified, majority party, sitting on a diminished, but still substantial (15-point) lead in the polls. According to your advisers, you knew what you needed to communicate, and your campaign plan was set. The outlines of that plan, which they made public, gave us pause. The campaign would return to those themes that worked so well in the primaries—trust, compassion, confidence in government and your own non-establishment, non-Washington background. We know you meant it because the first wave of television commercials has already begun, and there you are, saying "We've seen walls built around Washington and we feel like we can't get through . . . We've seen mistakes made in government that we don't want to see made again." We know the polls tell you these themes go down well. For our part, however, we would like to see you stop running vaguely against Washington and use this campaign to tell voters specifically what you intend to do when you get there.

You would avoid being tagged a McGovern type, a big-spending liberal, your strategists said, simply by moving to the political center; by talking about high welfare costs and rising crime; by stressing inflation, which seems to be more on the public's mind, rather than unemployment; by emphasizing the need for a balanced budget and the need for a "tough" military machine. None of this, we were told, should be interpreted as Jimmy saying anything different—just Jimmy saying the same things differently.

At the same time, the strategy called for capitalizing on your party's edge in registration and public confidence by growing more partisan, by campaigning as a Democrat, kicking off in Warm Springs and running as the spiritual heir of Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy and Johnson, while at the same time avoiding the albatross of the party's current liability—Congress. "They will not hang Jimmy with a profligate Congress," one of your aides told me. "We don't intend to be held accountable for what happens in Washington. *Period.*" If Gerald Ford traps you into running against the Democratic Congress, it's going to be a long campaign for all of us.

Finally, your strategists said, you would carry your campaign to carefully selected working class communities, thereby shoring up your oft-noted weaknesses among Catholics and ethnics. A good idea.

Unfortunately, your first two weeks on the stump did little to ease initial misgivings about themes and strategy, and raised some new ones. For example, you single-handedly resurrected the fuzziness charge that stalked you through the primaries, but was dropped by your old adversaries in the name of party unity at Madison Square Garden. It began when you spoke out on grain embargoes at the Iowa State fair, then modified those views before the *Des Moines Register*'s editorial board some hours later. Then, in your meeting with Catholic bishops and your encounters with anti-abortion demonstrators, you seemed once again to be trying to refine your position on the issue that simply won't go away—abortion. From the time you alluded to a "national statute" back in Iowa before the first primaries (which caucuses you won with "pro-life" support), to now, when you talk of being against a constitutional amendment but not necessarily *any conceivable* constitutional amendment, this issue has contributed more than any other to your image as a trimmer, a politician who shades issues to suit the bias of the audience he faces. It simply won't work in a general election campaign. The media coverage is too constant, too intensive, as you must have learned in your two-day dialogue with yourself over whether FBI Director Clarence Kelley should or should not be fired. You sounded contradictory and meandering and allowed Ford to charge "flip-flop."

Two of the items from your early campaign trip were especially vexing. The first, of course, was your remark to local officials in Oklahoma to the effect that you favor the current Supreme Court's "removal of technicalities which obviously prevent the conviction and punishment of those who are guilty." You said, further, "I believe the Burger Court is moving back in the proper direction."

To many of us already wary of the conservative tone set at the outset of your sun-belt trip (including some of your own staff), this sounded curiously like the declarative restatement of a question from a public opinion poll. Did your pollster, Patrick Caddell, have a survey showing voters have negative attitudes about the permissive Supreme Court when questioned about crime? Was this part of your calculated conservatism? Everyone from your campaign with whom I spoke, Eizenstat, Caddell, Sam Bliecher, a University of Toledo Law School professor who serves as an adviser on your issues staff, and several others all said, no, it was not planned, it was an off-the-cuff remark made to local law enforcement officials. Caddell admitted that the general public probably agreed with what you said, but insisted he has never polled on the issue. Eizenstat said that your spontaneous remarks represented no change in your general point of view. Bliecher was instructed, nonetheless, to prepare some material supporting your remarks as soon as the statements came over the

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Associated Press ticker in your headquarters; and he offers two cases as examples of what you might have been suggesting. One involves whether IRS agents must give Miranda warnings (against self-incrimination and about the right to counsel) when interviewing taxpayers, and the other involves the question of whether such warnings must be given to witnesses who appear before grand juries. Both narrow the rights of accused persons under Miranda; both nibble at the edges of the exclusionary rule which prohibits the fruits of illegal conduct from being used in prosecutions, and which seems to be the ultimate target of the Burger Court.

However, neither your comments nor the material offered by your staff gives us more than a peripheral idea of what you really mean or what your statement actually communicated to your audience. In several much more important search and siezure cases, the Burger Court has expanded the power of police and federal authorities to seize evidence without warrants and use it in prosecution. Earlier this summer, the Court also curtailed federal *habeas corpus* relief, the availability of federal courts for persons in state prisons who seek to have their convictions reviewed. These are central to the thrust of the Burger Court in criminal law; are they also within the bounds of the "technicalities" you mentioned? Many liberals regard the Burger Court as the most lasting monument Richard Nixon left America. Favorable comment on its record is not an area in which you can afford to be vague.

A second area where you, as an avowed civil rights advocate, raised some special hackles was on your swing through Mississippi, where you campaigned arm-in-arm with James Eastland and John Stennis, calling them "leaders and statesmen . . . committed to absolute integrity." James Wooten of *The New York Times* characterized the two Mississippi senators as, "two of the country's most prominent segregationists . . . two men who have tried vigorously and sometimes successfully to abort every civil rights bill introduced in their long congressional careers . . . (who have) stood firm and unyielding in defense of racial separation as both constitutionally defensible and morally right."

We have heard the arguments of those who say that it is more significant that anti-integrationists like Eastland and Stennis endorse Jimmy Carter, who says the civil rights laws are the best thing that ever happened to the South, than it is that Carter endorses them. We don't think so. You are the one who's running for President. Our expectations of Eastland and Stennis are much lower; you campaign on the slogan "Why not the best?" When you embrace those who contradict your own fundamental beliefs, you contribute to an erosion of confidence in your character, and that, after all, is still the main issue in this campaign.

Finally, of course, there are the two issues of greatest importance to the voters —your remarks on tax reform to the Associated Press and your reflections on lust for the readers of *Playboy*. In these interviews, you managed to lay to rest the once widely accepted notion that Jimmy Carter is a careful semanticist, a man who is precise in the selection and use of words. In the first of these interviews, by vowing to raise the taxes of people in higher income brackets and then defining that category as including anyone above the median income (about $13,000 today), you have plainly introduced the old George McGovern Competence Issue into this campaign. When McGovern admitted he could not put a price-tag on his plan to rebate an across-the-board $1000 to every individual, things began to unravel. Your image to date has been that of a man who could quietly, capably and reliably institute programs of broad government reorganization and sweeping tax reform. You may have pulled the finger out of that dyke. Moreover, it was a serious political boner to suggest that persons above the median income will have "substantial increases" in taxes; that income group (exactly 50 percent of the population) will probably constitute about 60 percent of the voters on November 2. You must now explain and refine what you meant . . . and give thanks that you didn't announce your median income tax increase package from the podium of the Walnut Street Theater in the presence of Gerald Ford and 100 million Americans.

As for the *Playboy* interview, it has potential for the same electoral peril as George Romney's 1968 "brainwashing" remark. It will hang around and become the sounding board against which any future piety on your part will resonate. Beyond its obvious political import—which will be greater once your *macho* rhetoric registers with the 51.3 percent of the electorate that is made up of women—these remarks are probably our best indication of your views about what should be public and private in a public man's life. Ever since Lyndon Johnson's post-operative scar, we have had quite enough of the politics of extraneous self-revelation. All of that aside, I agree with Bishop Smallwood Williams who heads the half-million member Bibleway Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ Worldwide, and is one of your supporters: "I wish he would get away from the Bible and stay on politics."

How much will these items affect your campaign? Quite a lot, but on balance the whole is probably less than the sum of the parts. Together they do not approach the Eagleton imbroglio in cumulative impact. Besides, every ship is permitted a shake-down cruise, and you have the convenient forum of the presidential debates in which to recover. As Pat Caddell will tell you, however, your biggest problem in the electorate is that you are not a known commodity; solid images of Jimmy Carter are just beginning to jell, so contradictions, defensiveness, continued modifications of earlier positions will all be damaging. The shaky start and bad publicity have already altered the odds, so you should

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revise your projections; a tie in the debates is no longer a win, as you earlier estimated it would be.

Right now, most of us would count ourselves Carter supporters, but skeptically so. In comparing your campaign to Gerald Ford's record, we find ourselves in Woody Allen's corner: we'd rather be vague than wrong. But we'd also rather make the choice on more substantial grounds; Gerald Ford is a conservative tried and true. There's not much in his record to commend him: we have no doubt of that. To paraphrase Eizenstat, it is *you*, Jimmy Carter, who is making it too easy on the conservative.

Ken Bode

Twenty Years After Polish October

Can Communism Change?

by Tad Szulc

Warsaw

As the summer turned into golden autumn across Poland this week and farmers began sowing the winter wheat, the present Polish regime faced its most serious political and social crisis since it came into power nearly six years ago in the wake of bloody food riots. This time too, food shortages and riots are at the root of the Polish crisis. But in 1976, there is a difference: it is a crisis in which the Communist government has chosen to reason and negotiate with the nation rather than impose its will through sheer power as other Communist regimes have done in the past.

Yet, the question is being asked in this uneasy city how long the Warsaw leadership can maintain its conciliatory policies without being forced by internal and external Communist pressures to harden its attitudes. Such a hardening would mean restrictions on the relative liberties Poles have increasingly enjoyed since 1970, and this is a key dimension of the crisis.

Made vulnerable by failures in economic planning during the last five-year period—with some of them due to uncontrollable factors such as bad weather affecting crops and a slow-down in exports to the West resulting from the recession—the "liberals" in the Communist leadership here are also vulnerable politically. This sense of malaise and uncertainty pervades the beautiful Polish capital: it is painfully perceptible in private conversations on all levels, it is seen in the nasty arguments in the queues in front of stores where certain foods are in short supply. And it explains the new pessimism felt by the moody Poles, whose hopes for a better future have so often been disappointed.

The shortages, to be sure, are not drastic and are chiefly confined to the cities. A lunch stop last week at a truckers' restaurant in the small town of Garwolin, southeast of Warsaw, for example, showed that one can eat a good meal of meat and fresh vegetables for the equivalent of 60 cents. But in Warsaw, where people demand a higher quality and better selection of food, there is grumbling after a wave of panic hoarding in anticipation of higher prices. And, after all, politics are determined in the cities. The last word has not been said, and the "liberals" may in the end carry the day.

That it should be so is a reflection of the extraordinary evolution of political practice in this nation that cannot quite find its place between the East and the West despite over three decades of Communist rule and ideological attachment to the Soviet Union. It is also a reflection of the deep political changes in Eastern Europe in the last 20 years: this autumn marks the 20th anniversary of the great uprisings in Poland and Hungary when Soviet armies found it necessary to intervene directly to guarantee the maintenance of Moscow's concept of stability in this part of the continent. And eight years ago, of course, the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia to prevent the perpetuation of an independent-minded regime that the Kremlin perceived as a threat to the entire Eastern European Communist system. Today, Eastern Europe does not think in terms of frontal challenge to the Russians; its leaders and politically conscious masses have learned the hard way that gradualism and sophistication pay off better in the long run. And, at the same time, a new Communist reality has forced the USSR itself to accept a degree of autonomy and flexibility in countries like Poland and Hungary.

The handling of the current Polish crisis by Edward Gierek, the first secretary of the Polish Communist party, is a case in point, coming as it does at a time of profound political shifts in the Communist world.

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After the Gierek regime committed what it now tacitly recognizes as a major blunder last June 25th by announcing sharp food price increases—meat alone was to go up 70 percent—it decided to cope with the resulting situation in a "Polish way." When protest strikes and riots broke out in several cities and industrial plants, the government reacted with greater sagacity than its predecessors. Its immediate response was to rescind the price increases and, in effect, to place a year's moratorium on the whole burning question of adjusting the structure of prices, pending a new study by five special commissions formed by the Communist party and the government. Though the cynics—and most Poles nowadays are cynics—contend that Gierek has made a virtue out of necessity, the regime has defused for at least a time what could have been an explosive chain reaction. In truth it gave in to popular sentiment. But Gierek, who himself assumed power in December 1970, after the regime of Wladyslaw Gomulka had sent out troops to fire on rioters protesting that year's food price rises, then took additional pacifying steps. In 1976, troops were kept in the barracks when rioters in the industrial city of Radom burned Communist party headquarters, looted stores and beat up policemen. The police were sent out in the streets without firearms, and several credible reports indicate that in several instances local security force "commanders" ignored orders from Warsaw—they were *not* Gierek's personal orders—to shoot at the rioters. Finally the Western-educated Gierek (he spent his youth and the war years in France and Belgium) was able to draw on his considerable popularity and his regime's vastly improved relationship with the Roman Catholic church in Poland—a political power in this country—to restore a modicum of social peace.

The Church, responding to Gierek's policy of "mutual tolerance" between Catholics and Communists, took the unprecedented step in mid-September of issuing an Episcopal Communiqué, signed by Poland's two cardinals and 75 bishops, urging "believers" to "work honestly" for the common welfare of all Poles. This, of course, was of immense political value to Gierek although he ignored a simultaneous appeal for amnesty for those sentenced after the June riots. This appeal was censored out of the Episcopal Communiqué as published in the general press, but it was printed in Church periodicals and read by priests throughout Poland at masses on Sunday, September 19.

In Communist politics, however, that which may have appeared as Gierek's strength—or wisdom—may also become his weakness. This is the crux of the current phase of the Polish crises—with vast uncertainties looming ahead. Gierek has so far dealt with crisis by applying his own brand of Polish Communist liberalism, a brand that exists nowhere else in Eastern Europe, but his policies have, at the same time, given new impetus to his old enemies within the party apparatus who until now had remained in the shadows.

A 10-day visit to Poland during September and a series of background discussions with key persons in the Communist party's central committee, economists, students and members of the middle class (a group very much in existence in the highly contradictory Polish social system) have suggested that against the background of deep public frustration with everyday life a muted but significant power struggle is underway in the ruling apparatus. On the political level, there are hardliners in the party—figures who never approved of Gierek's relative liberalism and his regime's considerable economic opening to the West in the last six years—who now take the view that he acted too permissively and indecisively in the aftermath of the June events. Some of them would have preferred a crackdown, and clearly there are pressures on Gierek to move in that direction. The anti-Gierek maneuvering inevitably feeds on the daily frustrations felt by the population. These are obvious to the most superficial observer in Warsaw: the queues in front of food stores (not mile-long, but long enough to irritate the daily shopper), the shortages of items ranging from quality meat to matches (nobody seems to know why Polish matches have vanished to be replaced by a small volume of North Korean matches), and the discouragingly low quality of many consumer goods.

Given the basic fact that most Poles simply do not understand the complex and often contradictory workings of the national economy, there is a tendency to blame the regime as a whole for inadequate farm production, the emphasis on exports with which to buy Western technology desperately needed to modernize the country (the famous Polish hams and sausages, for example, can no longer be bought here), and various forms of social and economic inequities. All this rubs off on Gierek, providing ammunition for those who would welcome a change at the top. As a senior party official, strongly pro-Gierek, remarked in a private conversation, "Our chief weakness is our internal propaganda . . . We seem unable to explain to our people just what we are trying to do and what our real problems are . . . This confuses the population, generates rumors and cynicism and reinforces the sense of crisis." A non-Communist intellectual, personally supportive of Gierek, put it this way: "We've been told for 30 years that socialism is turning us into an educated nation, so why does the regime treat us like children and not tell us the truth? If the nation knew the truth, it would rally behind the government for the simple reason that prosperity is a national need and not just a Communist party gain . . . This is why the Church has taken a new position in this emergency."

Rather belatedly, Gierek showed some frankness in his speeches in September before the plenum of the party's central committee and in a speech to workers in the industrial town of Mielce. Answering questions

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from the workers, Gierek said that "I would be insincere if I said that I see no reasons for concern . . . There are voices of criticism and dissatisfaction and impatience over different shortages, especially meat. We listen to these voices with reason and understanding." Gierek has endeavored to explain that Poland's food production has been going down while consumption, particularly of meat, has been increasing in part because of higher wages for workers in the last five years. He has stressed bad weather as one of the reasons for this disparity—Poland's crops in the last two years have been bad and she must now import grain, meat and fodder—but he has touched ever so slightly on the deep structural problems in Poland's farm economy. As a party official commented privately, "It does not behoove a Communist party leader to admit openly that after 30 years of building socialism, we have forgotten to build an agricultural base."

Still, the admission came implicitly when Gierek announced before the party's central committee on September 9 a new program of restructuring Poland's agriculture in the next five years as the nation's top priority. Why agriculture has been allowed to lag behind Poland's intensive industrial development, especially since 1970, is something of a mystery in terms of socialist planning. And the result of this confusion of priorities is evident even in casual trips in central Poland. New multi-lane highways, not there when I last visited Poland three years ago, now crisscross the countryside. Automotive traffic has doubled. There are new factories and highrises in Warsaw's suburbs; the regime tries to cope with the chronic urban housing shortage even as it develops industry. But a few miles away, land is prepared for winter planting with horsedriven ploughs, and potatoes are harvested by old men and women, for the young people have fled the farms for the cities. Gierek has made an effort to communicate with the population as none of his predecessors ever did. Yet, nobody in a position of authority has been able to explain in my Warsaw discussions why the government had suddenly decided to go for a 70 percent rise in meat prices in June.

Through the so-called process of "consultation," a Gierek innovation, the word had gone out earlier to party cadres that meat would be increased by 35 percent. Because this system has its obvious limitations, no objections were raised. Local party leaders went along with the explanation that meat consumption must be slowed down and that the government could not forever subsidize food prices. They had remained constant for some years at the retail level although the government had increased payments to farmers (for most land here is owned privately). Thus word was sent back to the top that there would be no adverse reaction to the planned price increases. Then suddenly, Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz announced on June 25 that meat would cost 70 percent more—and all hell broke loose. The regime's instant retreat on prices emphasized that its own planning and political process had broken down, and ever since, Gierek and his advisers have been trying to pick up the pieces and lessen the tensions.

Now the question discussed in urgent whispers around Warsaw is whether or not Gierek will be given time to pick up those pieces. No distinctive anti-Gierek faction can so far be identified in the Politburo—a rather colorless group that Gierek has been running as something of a committee—but the word "succession" is being mentioned in careful conversations. The only possible successor, according to Warsaw politicians, would be Politburo member Edward Babiuch, a 53-year-old career "aparat" man who is in charge of party organization—a powerful position from which he controls political patronage. Little known in Poland, Babiuch has not emerged as a challenger to Gierek, but, under certain circumstances, the opposition to the present leadership could coalesce around him. One of the indications of the developing power struggle is that there is increasing talk within the party that the Congress scheduled for next year may have to be postponed. To a great many Poles, Gierek's departure would be a sign that such liberties as the nation now enjoys, relative as they are, would be curtailed, with greater controls established on what is being published in Poland, shown in the theater, and even said in a reasonably loud voice in public. There is concern that travel to the West might again be somewhat restricted.

Quite a bit, then, is at stake in the Polish crisis. Thus far Gierek has been able to operate through what he likes to call "Socialist democracy." But he has made enemies: party traditionalists frankly dislike his dialogue with the Church. And, aside from the food-related problems, his regime also faces other major difficulties.

Because of its intensive industrialization, Poland has run up an external debt in the West now totaling nearly nine billion dollars, largely through the purchase of modern technology. Gierek's idea was to apply this technology to new industry that is oriented to exports to the West so that Poland could acquire in time needed hard currency. The Western recession, however, has sharply curtailed Polish exports since 1974. And among the decisions facing policymakers here is whether to shift production toward the Communist world—a painful move. Because Communist Poland now so greatly requires Western markets, it has today a vested interest in Capitalist prosperity, another ideological contradiction besetting this European twilight zone. She needs this prosperity to justify her industrial policies of the last five years.

Obviously crucial to the future of the Gierek regime will be the Soviet attitude. Thus far the Kremlin has given every sign of support for Gierek, whatever it may think of his policies. Poles find some solace in the fact that at the East Berlin conference of European Communist parties last June, the Russians had accepted a

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document setting forth, in effect, the concept of the autonomy of each party. During this month's Warsaw Pact maneuvers in Poland—code-named "Shield 1976"—Gierek appeared prominently with Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov. Earlier, he had visited Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in the Crimea. Twenty years after the Soviet interventions in Poland and Hungary, the Polish crisis may well become the test of whether the face of communism in Eastern Europe is really changing.

End of a Free University

Expendable CUNY

by Leonard Kriegel

So many of the people now scampering for the lifelines of their own safety were once intent on making New York a reflection of their passions. Perhaps they will take those passions with them. The male leader of one Manhattan Democratic reform club (male and female created we them) is said to be putting his Manhattan townhouse up for sale (asking price, $160,000) to quest with a reformer's invulnerable zeal into the suburban wilderness of Connecticut. And this battered city, however paradoxical it may seem, has been alive and strangely at peace with itself this past summer. Having survived so much, it may yet discover that it can survive the loss of its Reform Democrats, too.

Still, in such an atmosphere, heady with the whiff of apocalypse, to write about the troubles of the City University of New York (CUNY) is bound to leave one feeling that he has missed the main feast. Perhaps the best reason for writing about the demise of CUNY is that its fate, like the fate of New York City, may not be as solitary as it now seems. Its promise was once national and its demise will be national too—a further setback for the prospects for a democratic system of higher education in the United States. Nothing that I have seen in 15 years at the City College of New York, the oldest college in the CUNY system, has left me as bitter as what has happened to it over the past year.

Nothing has served New York City better than its municipal university system. From its inception following a city-wide referendum in 1847—passed overwhelmingly by a margin of 19,305 votes against 3409—the Free Academy, the original name of the College of the City of New York and the ancestor of CUNY, served this nation as few other institutions have served it. In 1870, the city government created the Normal College of the City of New York, later to become Hunter College, the first "free" college devoted to the education of women. Hunter and City were joined by Brooklyn and Queens in the 1930s. With the post-war explosion in higher education, the creation of the City University of New York was only a matter of time. In 1961, CUNY was born, the largest municipal college and university system in the country. By 1975 it had grown to enormous proportions: anchored by a graduate school and university center which provided everything from doctorates to remedial education. CUNY also ran a medical school, nine community colleges, and nine senior colleges. It educated a total of 280,000 students; its matriculated undergraduates paid no tuition; its graduate students paid substantially less than students at, for example, NYU or Columbia. Even before William Simon discovered its profligacy, CUNY was viewed as a threat by the city's private colleges. It probably was. Fewer and fewer children of bus drivers and auto mechanics were willing to spend substantial tuition sums at LIU or NYU or St. Francis when they could receive as good an education at CUNY for "free."

Unfortunately, the idea of a "free" college education provided as a municipal service generates a great deal of hostility on the part of non-New Yorkers, a hostility so emotional that one cannot answer it by pointing to the benefits provided the nation-at-large by the work of, say, Jonas Salk, George Washington Goethals, Arthur Kornberg, Felix Frankfurter or the legion of other men and women educated for "free" since 1849 (the year the Free Academy accepted its first class) because there simply was no other place they could afford to go. Such arguments do not convince the likes of William Simon, for whom city profligacy was symbolized by the policy of no tuition. And it was not Simon alone who viewed

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CUNY as the embodiment of the city's sins. During a recent stint at the MacDowell Colony, I heard similar complaints from a number of my fellow artists and writers. The lack of tuition was held up, like the bloodied shirt of Reconstruction Days, by President Ford when he brought the city to heel; and it disturbed upstate legislators sufficiently so that they refused to bail out CUNY until the system agreed to mandate tuition at the same level as that charged by the state college system. To listen to the arguments about the necessity of tuition—a "necessity" even its proponents called "cosmetic"—was to be reminded once again of the extent to which higher education in this country remains bound to a demand for worthiness, a moral demand in which the student is somehow expected to prove his *right to an education*.

It is unfair to place the full blame for CUNY's present difficulties upon the moral provincialism of state and national officials. (The inequities are glaring, though: the state finances the state college system at approximately a two-to-one dollar ratio over its funding of the senior colleges in the CUNY system.) But if CUNY embodied much that was commendable in American higher education, it has also, more recently, been the source of a great deal of rhetorical nonsense and simplistic banalities, much of it voiced in the name of "freedoms" as mysterious in their origins as they are uncertain in their ends. All too often in academic life, the political mentality wars with the bureaucratic mentality. But at CUNY, intellectual common sense was forced on the defensive by an academic "Left" most charitably regarded as passionate in its stupidity and an academic "Right" that was monolithic in its rigidity.

Most of what CUNY suffers from at present is beyond its control. It can do nothing about the financial vassalage of New York City; it can do very little about the reaction against higher education that has apparently taken hold throughout the country. But it should be able to do something about itself, for CUNY as a system no longer knows exactly what its function is. As an educational system, it has tried to be all things to all men, and a good deal of its own confusion is the result of that attempt. Running a first-rate doctoral program side by side with the most massive remedial education effort in the history of higher education is bound to create problems.

CUNY was chosen to be the subaltern for many other social and political institutions that appeared depleted at the end of the '60s. And the paradox today of being a member of the educational community at CUNY is that there is little the members of that community believe in less than the possibility of rational solutions to CUNY's problems. And this, in part, because the problems are the product of rationality at war with itself. Nothing is shallower than academic fashion when it runs political.

From its inception, the Open Admissions program was treated as a political rather than an intellectual or academic problem. And statements about it, whether endorsing or attacking it, were inevitably political. It was almost as if we were choosing which faith to declare, and the rhetoric surrounding Open Admissions was confessional. This is still the problem one has in writing about it today. I myself supported Open Admissions in the beginning, spent five years teaching Open Admissions students, and continue to believe that, with all of the sins committed in its name, Open Admissions promised a further democratization of higher education in America, something that I consider desirable. Having said this, let me admit that Open Admissions has probably been more of a failure than a success, certainly if we measure it as we usually measure higher education. And to claim that we cannot measure the success or failure of Open Admissions as we usually measure such things is the kind of intellectual dishonesty that has already gotten us into trouble.

The problems facing CUNY now are compounded by the fact that Open Admissions failed in what it set out to do, for what it set out to do was dictated by utopian political ends. CUNY became a kind of sociological stopgap, an institution which would not so much "educate" as "certify." Like the problems it was designed to cure—stigmatization because of race, inadequate secondary school preparation, the lack of understanding between those who had been kept out and those who were within the system—Open Admissions was to be a method of dealing with the society out there. But if it seemed pragmatic, it was covertly messianic—a reflection of that enormous American faith in the power of education to change lives, to make them better by conferring status. In this respect, it was not merely a New York City phenomenon; in the nation-at-large, there is, even today, a residual belief in the power of higher education to create opportunity, and it is not a mistaken belief. According to HEW, 60 percent of American high school graduates will be in college by 1980. The recent rejuvenation of the trade school mentality along with the enormous costs of running the country's higher education establishment may cut into the figure somewhat but the change won't be significant.

The tragedy of Open Admissions was that a reasonable solution to the problems it thrust upon us—an intelligent remedial program based upon a realistic assessment of what we could and could not achieve—was ruled out from the start. Open Admissions was a cause that some among us saw as the path to moral salvation and others damned out-of-hand as the primal sin. Less than six weeks after that first confused Open Admissions class entered CUNY in the fall of 1970, Evans and Novak, those twin beacons of rationality, had already denounced the program as the greatest threat to intellectual integrity since the burning of the Alexandria library.

Because the program was open-ended and because it tried to provide a total change in the ghetto student's life, it cost the city a great deal and was probably spread thinner than it should have been. By 1974, the cost of

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remedial work alone had reached the staggering sum of $39 million. And by that time, it was quite apparent that the results were not what we had hoped for. Even before the financial crisis surfaced, CUNY was being told to choose between "excellence" and "free tuition," a choice which quite obviously came down to junking Open Admissions or sticking with it. CUNY could not do both, since apparently no one was going to tolerate our eating high on the hog for much longer. Education had to be *earned*. Unfortunately, CUNY provided a good deal of the ammunition used against it. The two- and four-year institutions seemed to mushroom at a frenetic pace, and some of them resembled colleges only in name. Exactly what specific educational mission they were to have was never made clear. All too often, they were part of a neighborhood redevelopment program. The magnitude of the task CUNY took upon itself can be seen by the different kinds of colleges it created: colleges for cops, colleges for bilingual students, colleges that were modified trade schools, colleges designed to enable one to transfer to other colleges. What is peculiar about this is *why* a city such as New York, given its shrinking tax base, took it upon itself to sponsor so vast and all-embracing a system. Free tuition had survived the depression, for then it had been granted to the "deserving"; it would not survive the city's fiscal collapse because now it had been stripped of its moral base. A lot of flies were eating off the honey and neither William Simon nor upstate legislators were particularly interested in feeding them.

But even if the recently enacted tuition bill—pegging CUNY tuitions to the level of state university tuitions—is largely cosmetic, a way of showing other communities that New York is to be properly punished for its largesse, it also represents a feeling that the system had simply bitten off too much and that its chief rationale is now simply to maintain CUNY as CUNY. This cannot merely be dismissed as anti-New York prejudice. In our colleges, programs mushroomed into an intellectual dole, the demands of one ethnic group for intellectual justification matched by the demands of the next. And so many of these programs seemed to have little to do with what is supposed to go on in a college. Rather than teaching students to resist the kinds of popular dogma so characteristic of modern societies, the programs themselves frequently parodied traditional intellectual disciplines. Academic "markets" were created as grab-bags of relevance, potpourris of "action"—and sometimes they were taught by faculty who approached their topics like placer miners washing their stones in Mark Twain's Nevada. Of course, this was no different from what one could find at Harvard and at Berkeley and at virtually every other college and university in America. But the CUNY colleges could afford it least. Because of Open Admissions and its new constituencies, CUNY should have been among the most conservative of academic systems; instead, it spun happily along on the roulette wheel of "relevance." The ultimate cost was both financial and intellectual. The damage caused our students by the concessions made to intellectual fashion is inexcusable. A college, after all, is where one expects students to come into contact with ideas, not attitudes, to wrestle with the art and minds of the past in order to struggle toward ideas of their own.

As of this writing, CUNY's future seems bleak. A new Board of Higher Education has been appointed, and its chief task seems to be to oversee the cutting of staff and tightening of budgets to meet a total budgetary reduction of $69 million. The city has announced its intention of withdrawing all support from CUNY within another year; such a move would save the city $147 million, and unless it is recouped from somewhere, it would also mean the end of CUNY. The state may take up some of that slack. If the state merely supports the CUNY senior colleges with the same level of funding it gives the state senior colleges, it will have gone a long way toward solving CUNY's financial problems. But there is no sign that it is ready to do so. Meanwhile, the system searches for other possible remedies. Every session of the University Senate since the summer of 1975 has focused upon the debacle. But it has done this with a sense of powerlessness, aware that it is talking about band-aids for gaping wounds. For that matter, the various college administrations, the chancellor's office, the Board of Higher Education, and the city government are equally powerless. This city is being directed by the state and federal governments, neither one of which is overwhelmingly sympathetic to its problems. Even the band-aids come from outside. And of all city agencies, higher education is probably most vulnerable to savage fiscal slashing. Personnel cuts at CUNY are already near the 30 percent level, as opposed to a figure only one third that for other city agencies and services. And that 30 percent may be just the beginning. For whatever reason, CUNY has not managed to garner demonstrable support from its 280,000 students and their families. Perhaps this is simply because faculty and students are caught up in their own dilemmas, the faculty reeling under the imposition of layoffs and the threat of more layoffs in the future, students bitter and confused about tuition and the future of CUNY. The acceptance notices mailed out to entering freshmen for the September 1976 class included suggested alternatives to CUNY, not, certainly, a gesture designed to inspire confidence.

Invariably, the problems of one's colleagues are the most glaring. A good friend of mine, a brilliant teacher and first-rate literary critic, was "excessed" from New York College in early August because he first arrived in the college two years ago, and the rules of seniority must be served. Having turned down a departmental chairmanship elsewhere because he wanted to see for himself whether Open Admissions could be made to work, he is understandably bitter as he waits to collect his unemployment checks. In my own department of English, the single largest department at the City College,

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virtually all part-time and 13 full-time faculty have received letters informing them that they have not been reappointed. Included among them are some of the finest teachers it has been my privilege to know. They were fired in July and August, when finding other jobs, even in a healthy academic marketplace, would be extremely difficult. And if registration falls as low as some people have projected, then many more jobs will be lost. Never particularly strong, the faculty's sense of solidarity seems to have degenerated into an ethnic jockeying for position. Claims muscle against claims, and few base their primacy on intellectual worth. Of course, this has been going on for some time. Relevance is sanctioned by HEW, too.

And yet, if I were black or Puerto Rican, I am certain that I would feel particularly bitter about what is happening to CUNY today. Since 1847, through wars and depressions, the City of New York provided a "free" college education for its citizens. Now that has ended. And we need not fool ourselves, it has ended for good, and it has ended at exactly that point when it was most useful to those who had never before been able to use it. I am not paranoid enough to ascribe this to racism. But then again, I am not black or Puerto Rican either. For white and black alike, however, it has become apparent that CUNY is expendable. Perhaps this has significance only for New York. But I doubt that. I suspect that if it is a small victory for the William Simons among us, it is one that gives them a great deal of hope for a future in which only those who have proved their "right" to an education will attend this nation's colleges and universities—all of them paying tuition.

Why the Election will be Close

Fighting the Image War

by Walter Dean Burnham

They're off and running. As of now the ultimate outcome of the Ford-Carter contest obviously is unknown. But it is not too soon to make some predictions about the unfolding shape of this election campaign and discuss their underlying rationale. First, turnout in this election will be at or below the all-time lows of 1920 and 1924: probably less than half of the potential electorate will bother to make a choice. Second, the Republican campaign will be oriented toward stressing all the old traditional values of American politics and economics. It will also, naturally, stress Gerald Ford's incumbency, his old-shoe personality, and the current state of peace and an improving economy. Third, this conservative campaign will do much better than the conventional wisdom of midsummer would have supposed, for two reasons: the personality and issue-projections of Jimmy Carter, and the relative importance of inflation as against unemployment for the half of the population that will actually vote in November. Finally, the public-opinion polls are more suspect than usual. Public opinion this year is both extremely volatile and charged with free-floating hostility toward politics and politicians. Paradoxically, this hostility may once again work to the benefit of the incumbent rather than the challenger. Above all, however, the election will be decided by the aggregate judgment of those who vote on the personal qualifications, as they see them, of the two men. Victory will go to the winner of the image war.

Analysis of each of these themes can cast useful light on our electoral politics as it operates today. We may begin with the question of who votes and who doesn't. Turnout in American presidential elections has always been lower during this century than participation rates in virtually any other Western nation. The data in *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* reveals that, for the mid-1960s, the United States ranked 12th from the bottom among 104 countries, between the turnouts of Barbados (91st) and Mexico (93rd). Moreover, participation has been falling at an accelerating rate since 1960. Only 55.7 percent of the potential electorate voted for President in 1972, and only 41.1 percent for congressmen in 1974.

It is a truism of mainstream thinking on the subject that our low participation rates have much to do with the registration hurdles that would-be voters have to cross in order to cast their ballots, hence such initiatives

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as the McGee post-card registration bill and the projected AFL-CIO registration drive. Clearly these hurdles do matter: if the state took full responsibility for enrolling voters, as it does everywhere else in the Western world, this by itself would raise participation rates by between 10 and 12 percent. For 1976, however, this would probably mean that turnout would return to about the mediocre 62 percent reached in 1960, despite the great gains in Southern electoral participation since then, which were stimulated by the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 and 1970. In 18 other countries with competitive Western-style party systems, a mean of 83.4 percent of the potential electorate cast valid votes in the early 1970s. We can reasonably assume, then, that about two-thirds of the enormous American abstention rate finds some directly political explanation, and this assumption is given major support by a just-released survey of prospective nonvoters by Peter Hart. In this poll, far the most important single reason given by nonvoters for their prospective abstention is that "Candidates say one thing and do another" (68 percent of the sample regard this as important). The question receiving the second largest proportion of "important" responses (55 percent) is no more cheerful: "It doesn't make any difference who is elected because things never seem to work out right." The first question involves a fundamental issue of democratic accountability, and the second an almost equally basic issue of the meaningfulness of elections in the shaping of public events. If Hart's projections are correct, the sense of alienation and futility is now so widespread among the adult population that only about 47 percent of them will bother to vote in November. If so, this will be the lowest level of participation since the creation of the party system in the late 1820s.

Who votes and who doesn't in American elections? The answer here has been clear for years: broadly, the upper half of the American class structure participates, the lower half abstains. The typical nonvoter would be, say, a nonwhite young woman who had not completed high school and whose family's income was below $8000 per year. The typical voter, on the other hand, would be a professional or managerial white middle-aged male who had completed college and whose family income was $15,000 or more. Long ago, in discussing this problem, I pointed out that this hole in the active electorate corresponded to the place in the social structure where a Socialist or Laborite party "ought" to have developed in the United States, as such parties did develop in almost all other Western political systems. There seems little reason to change that view today. And the Hart poll reveals what we might expect under these conditions: nonvoters reveal a lack of interest in the agendas and issues that interest the American middle class, disillusionment and distrust of the candidates, and a total absence of perception of any conceivable political alternative to what exists.

All of this has consequences. We may put aside the longer-range issues of system legitimacy, or the possible emergence of a man on horseback who could fill this growing vacuum, until such time as we have a full-fledged crisis in the political economy. More immediately, however, it must be stressed that this enormous class skew in participation has implications for campaign strategies. The Democratic party and its labor allies have emphasized jobs and unemployment, and the Republicans the danger of inflation. Douglas Hibbs of MIT has shown that there is a class-related tradeoff in public-opinion data on these two issues. There is much greater sensitivity to the threat of inflation among the middle than among the working classes, and much greater sensitivity to unemployment among working-class Americans than among those in the middle classes. With the large and growing class distortion in active electoral participation taken into account, it is evident that the active half of the electorate is much more sensitive to inflation (and less sensitive to "jobs") issues than is the American population as a whole. It would seem that as turnout declines from an already mediocre level, it declines relatively more among the less-educated and less well-off than among others. Thus, support for social-capital and social-welfare expenditures is minimized and support for budget-balancing and capital-accumulation measures grows.

As in times past, the Democratic platform calls for major social programs designed to benefit the losers in the great game of American political economy. The Republican platform calls, in the name of free enterprise, for government actions and inactions to benefit primarily the winners in this political-economy game. The heavy class skew in participation is largely the result of the "liberal" party's inability to mobilize its potential forces in the electorate. This means that in reality the Democratic platform is aimed at a "phantom public" to a much greater extent than the Republican platform is. Both Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter act as though they know this. The President emphasizes the dangers of runaway inflation, big government and other evils associated with Democratic emphasis on social expenditure. Carter, for his part, first makes a series of breathtaking promises in his acceptance speech (quite possibly a serious tactical error in itself), and then suggests that the millennium may have to be deferred until he can balance the budget—say, until 1980 or thereabouts when, presumably, new promises can be made. And so Budget Director James Lynn gets the opportunity to score political points, welcoming Carter's endorsement of "fiscal sanity" while questioning his inconsistency on this quite fundamental issue. Carter's reaction here may reflect his awareness of the realities of electoral participation in America and its implications, but they create some obvious problems for his campaign; and even more, they reflect some not-so-obvious problems underlying his whole effort.

It should be recognized that Jimmy Carter is on the

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horns of a dilemma, a large part of which has structural origins. Carter won the Democratic nomination in large part because his personality and his issue style suited the context of Democratic party politics in 1976.

A basic theme of serious work on late-capitalist political economy has been the identification of internal contradiction in its operations. Broadly put, this is the contradiction between two primary functions of the state. One of these is the promotion of capital accumulation and profitability, as well as the maintenance of governmental legitimacy, which entails the expenditure of funds for social-capital and social-welfare purposes. As capitalism becomes increasingly modified away from the free-market model, which collapsed in 1929, the pursuit of both functions has necessitated a colossal expansion of the public sector.

A dominant emphasis on accumulation strategies leads toward anti-inflationary public policy (up to a point), toward a curtailment of expenditures in the domestic social sector, and toward tax policies that stimulate the profitability of investment and are conducive to the generation of capital. In short, it leads toward orthodox Republican fiscal, tax and spending policies. A dominant emphasis on legitimation strategies, on the other hand, leads toward interventionist public policy to cope with unemployment, to raise money to ameliorate the lot of the "surplus population," and for marginally redistributive, "loophole-closing" tax reform. In short, it leads toward orthodox Democratic fiscal, tax and expenditure policies. This year, the party platforms are models of position-issue clarity. The Republicans emphasize their commitment to accumulation, the Democrats to social spending. There's far more than a dime's worth of difference this year.

But life is more complicated in 1976. Looked at merely from the viewpoint of short-range political-economy issues, the years since 1973 have been dominated by a new "stagflation" all over the advanced industrial world. Yields on investment over the past decade have declined, unemployment has risen rapidly and inflation even more rapidly. The Phillips Curve of happy memory has been replaced by highly irregular movements: the old, more or less predictable tradeoffs between unemployment and inflation on which economists and policymakers of an earlier era relied have disappeared. As the recent spate of alarmed writings about the future of democracy in the West have stressed, a new zero-sum game seems to come into being. Pursuit of high-expenditure policies now appears to lead straight to rates of inflation unacceptable to corporate capital and to the broad middle classes. Pursuit of accumulation strategies, on the other hand, greatly escalates the potential for economic slump, of which the 1974-1975 decline gave us a foretaste.

Beyond this lies another issue, sensed both by corporate organs like *Business Week* and Marxist analysts like James O'Connor. At some point, *simultaneously* growing needs to use the state to promote profitability in a stagnant economy and to increase expenditures to pacify a growing surplus population may well lead to a struggle over outright redistribution, *i.e.*, modification of the basic rules of the political-economy itself. Spenglerians at the Republican convention like Barry Goldwater and John Connally rang all the changes on this point, prompting me to wonder which party's men had occupied the White House for the past eight years.

Like the Central Powers in World War I, the Republican party fights on interior lines. It may have declined to the point that only one-fifth of the electorate identifies with it, but the GOP is now unambiguously a conservative party. The Democratic coalition, being much larger and having a much wider variety of well organized producer, consumer, labor, regional and other interests within it, is—like the Allied coalition in World War I—enormously heterogeneous. It embodies persistent internal conflicts on a number of fundamental issues, some of the more important of which are economic. As the recent Senate votes on the so-called tax reform bill of 1976 once again reminds us, a substantial part of this party is as wedded to its own version of the status quo as any Republican.

Many of the most important internal tensions within the Democratic coalition involve an unresolved—perhaps unresolvable—struggle. One may suppose, given the current profile of participation and opinion in the American public—that if a candidate had been nominated who was as liberal as the party platform, he might well suffer a fate similar to George McGovern's. On the other hand, an outright acceptance of the full accumulation program would place the candidate so close to Ford and his economic advisers that wholesale defections from the party's large left wing would inevitably follow. It goes without saying that there are many other issues voters care about, and where very similar conflicts exist—for example, abortion and "right to life." But, to judge from Gallup's 1976 surveys so far, the crucial issues this year remain economic. One might almost say that the basic contradiction between accumulation and legitimation needs in our political economy is the focal point of intense ambiguity not only within the party but within Jimmy Carter himself. Careful modulation of response under such circumstances might represent the best possible, or even the only realistic, strategy. But Carter's dealing with the underlying political-economy issues, no less than his sorry performance in the Kelley affair, reveals not careful modulation so much as mixed messages: major promises, but with fatal conditions tacked on; firing today, maybe retention tomorrow.

Gerald Ford, of course, will play on his incumbency for all it is worth. Even discounting for the fact that his is a historically unique kind of incumbency, it should be worth a good deal. In this century, at any rate, incum-

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bent Presidents have lost only twice (in 1912 and 1932), and then under abnormal conditions wholly unlike those of 1976. Ford will also, however, profit greatly from Carter's issue style unless it is drastically changed. The case of FBI Director Clarence Kelley is a fine example of Carter's problems in attempting to win the battle of the images. He had three choices. He could have avoided discussing the matter altogether, a perfectly rational choice in view of its small overall importance in a presidential campaign. Alternatively, he could have raised a crucial issue: Kelley has clearly been led up the garden path by his own subordinates in this domestic-espionage agency, and hence has demonstrated his incapacity to control, much less lead, it. Properly played, this gambit could have served both to point up the systematic violations of constitutional rights that the FBI has been committing over the years and to stress the mediocrity of our current national leadership. Instead, he made a third choice—to concentrate on Kelley's acceptance of small contributions from his employees. In addition to being the worst choice of the three, it was compounded by Carter's subsequent unwillingness to say that he will replace Kelley in January 1977 if he is elected. Thus the President can appear in the White House garden to criticize Carter both for callousness and for being inconsistent and confusing, and Carter is placed on the defensive.

It does not take very much predictive skill to point out that this sort of thing, if it happens very often, could cost Carter the election. To be sure, this incumbent is exceptionally vulnerable because of the continuing radiation from Watergate and because of the economic situation. Economic issues will probably continue to dominate public opinion in this election, compared with "social" or foreign-policy issues. It is clear that recovery from the 1974-1975 slump has been very unevenly distributed. Generally, people making over $15,000 a year are experiencing relatively good times, while those families making under $12,000 are in difficult financial shape. Overall, when one corrects for inflation, the real income of the American worker has not risen since 1970. These "two nations" are divided in a ratio of about three to seven in the total population and, very roughly, in a ratio of about two to three among the probable active electorate of 1976.

Recent polls, such as that reported on September 9 by *The New York Times*, make it quite clear that there is currently a strong Democratic preponderance among registered voters. Even with the most pessimistic turnout assumptions factored in, Ford would have to win not much less than two-thirds of independents in order to eke out a bare plurality. Thus, both geographically and structurally, this election is likely to resemble those of the 1940-1948 period more closely than any we have had in the past quarter-century. Further, it seems nearly certain that the economy will continue on its relatively stagnant course through election day. Were personal factors not so important in the contemporary American electorate, we might have supposed that this general pattern of preference would hold up until November 2. In that event, even a 47 percent turnout would yield a victory for Carter by about a 55-45 percent margin.

And yet there is the other side of the coin, again reported by the *Times* poll: nearly one-fifth of the total registered electorate was undecided as of Labor Day, more than twice as many as in any election at this stage of the campaign from 1960 through 1972. Support is notably soft and volatile; we have tried to suggest some underlying reasons for this. This election will probably be decided in the end by those who respond to personal images, in short by how independents and undecideds react to the campaigns of the two candidates. Accordingly, the debates between Ford and Carter have the potential for being decisive, particularly if Ford should be perceived as dominating them. The plain truth of the matter is that, in the normal state of things, the deck is stacked very heavily in American presidential elections against challengers. Ford can afford to make more mistakes than Carter, and Carter's fundamental vulnerability is in his style in dealing with issues. But it is Carter who has been making most of the serious blunders in the pre-debate stage of this campaign. For one thing, it is always a political mistake in this country for a candidate to get very specific about tax reform especially when his proposals call for taxing the affluent more and the not-so-affluent less.

For another thing, there is the now-famous Carter interview in *Playboy*. Granting the interview in the first place lays him open to the charge of helping Hugh Hefner sell his magazine. To many right thinkers—and there are many right thinkers in the American electorate—*Playboy* is the work of Satan. Many in the women's movement, while not using that vocabulary, will probably feel the same way. As to the substance, read whole it is a rather appealing personal witness by a truly devout man. But the language, especially because it is in cold print, derogates from the dignity which is a basic part of the popular image of Presidents. And the agonizing over his personal sinfulness conveys information about the candidate which a great many of his potential supporters are in no way capable of using positively in forming their images.

The probabilities favor a very close race. Ford may win the image war among independents and undecideds. As always in recent years, the presidency is at the vortex of symbolic conflicts over the meaning of America as a collective enterprise. As party loyalty has declined massively since the 1940s, personality has become increasingly important in deciding presidential election outcomes. As always in recent years, the Republicans have the great advantage of knowing where they stand and their candidate, for better or for worse, is all of a single piece. As for Democrats—well, as the prophet says, "If the trumpet giveth forth an uncertain sound, who shall gird himself for the battle?"

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Political Errors

The Front (Columbia). Last winter I had a sort of conversation-interview with Martin Ritt before a meeting of New York film professionals, and coincidentally it turned out to be the day on which he had done his last location shooting for this new film. I have always admired Ritt because I think it's a poor artistic conspectus that can't afford a few artists who are dominated by social-political concerns and because, unlike (say) Stanley Kramer, Ritt has often shown a dramatic gift and a congeniality with actors. (He has been an actor himself, most recently in *End of the Game*.) If he could lapse into facile sentiment as in *Sounder*, he could contrive true sentiment as in *Conrack* and *Pete 'n' Tillie*; films like *Hud* and *Hombre* and *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* had their graceless aspects but they certainly had good acting in them and an atmosphere about them of a guiding intelligence that was really intelligent. His new film is set c. 1950 and deals with people who—like Ritt himself and Walter Bernstein, his screenwriter—had been blacklisted during the high HUAC and Joe McCarthy days. That night Ritt was obviously deeply happy that the picture had been made, deeply grateful to the new president of Columbia Pictures (David Begelman) for making it possible, and convinced that it was the best picture of his career. How very much I wish that I could agree.

But the principal trouble connects with Ritt's happiness that night: the picture seems to have been made just because it *could* be made. Communists and Communist sympathizers call themselves such and are shown as persecuted. The majority are plainly Jewish. TV networks are shown as trembling at the pressure of a "patriotic clearance" service and the whim of a man who owns three supermarkets. Actors who had once been involved in radical marches and meetings for social reasons and had no more political concern than rabbits are shown to be hounded. Zero Mostel, who was himself blacklisted, plays an actor driven to suicide—a story based on a notorious horrible story of those days. (In the darkest blacklist days I saw Mostel—much better than he is in this picture!—performing in a scrappy revue in a small hotel ballroom.) But after all these latter-day licenses are exercised, *The Front* gives us no new insights, no deepening of the experience in any way. And the frankly utilitarian services it might have performed—to remind us that such popular frenzies are always possible and to assure those who can't remember those days that they really did happen—are severely compromised by the story Ritt-Bernstein have chosen to tell and the way they have told it.

Woody Allen plays the leading role—in fact, it's the title role. He is a cashier in a bar-and-grill, a very small-time hustler and bookmaker, who went to school with a fellow who is a big TV scriptwriter, now blacklisted because he is a Communist sympathizer. Allen agrees to serve as his friend's front: to pose—for 10 percent commission—as the author of his friend's scripts and, soon, as the author of scripts of his friend's friends. This fronting works well for a while but eventually leads to complications with a girl who works in TV and with a congressional subcommittee.

Now the idea of founding an ugly drama on a peripheral character might have been very effective, the sad song of a Prufrock who was not meant to be Prince Hamlet but found himself center stage, an eccentric structure that could have underscored the arbitrariness and blind munching hatreds of those days. Or the "peripheral" hero could have been used for pure farce, with the harmonics of farce underscoring the ludicrous fury and thinly disguised self-promotion of the persecutors (as in Sartre's excellent political farce *Nekrassov*). But here we get a hybrid—a role that was apparently written "straight" but is played by Allen, who was hired apparently to "insure" the film. Allen is a very funny writer who has lately been learning how to direct and perform his own idiosyncratic comedy, but he has not yet begun to learn how to act, in any legitimate sense, and, worse, he doesn't even try. He bends almost all of this role to the Allen *shnook* persona—all the vocal and physical angularities, the wriggling, the apologetic sidewise aggressiveness.

It wrecks what credibility the film might have had, and credibility is *all* it might have had. For a TV network to believe that this character is the writer he is pretending to be would be to move the whole film to the plane of farce, which would have been OK in itself but is certainly not where it wants to be. Nothing in the film around Allen is meant to be funny and yet there he is, being funny. The ending, when he stands up to the Congressmen because of the suicide of his friend, is scuttled by everything that precedes it. When Vittorio De Sica as the swindler-pimp went heroically to the firing squad in *General della Rovere*, I believed it because the pressures on him and the situation around him were overwhelming and because redemption-by-gesture was shown as possible for his character. When Allen goes off happily handcuffed to jail at the end of this film, cheered by a placard-carrying crowd (who were *they*?), I felt that some snippets from a different film had been tagged on.

Allen makes it difficult for the people around him to work because they are trying to act and he is doing his night-club stuff. A very pleasant new actress named Andrea Marcovicci merely looks foolish when she tells us how much she loves him. True, she is moved in great degree by the scripts she thinks he has written, but how could she have found any trace in this man of the author of those scripts? The only member of the cast with whom Allen partly dovetails is Mostel, but that's for a negative reason: Mostel is now all patent performer, unable to make us believe what he says when he is not performing. He pounds and pounds. Hearing Mostel speak these days is like

Films Worth Seeing

The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings. Warm sprawling fun about black baseball players pre-Jackie Robinson.

The Clockmaker. French film about the father of a young murderer and the detective in charge of the case. Politically glib but exceptionally moving.

The Shootist. Clunky Western script but John Wayne presents John Wayne Incorporated very nicely. James Stewart jimmies open a supporting role.

Silent Movie. Mel Brooks' best—less frenetic, so amusing much of the time, with a kind of companionable charm.

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having him fall on you, repeatedly.

A sad minor irony is that Ritt's camerawork has never been more restrained, more precise and maturely controlled. A sad major irony is that his film only brushes inconsequentially the two chief thematic points he wants to make: 1) The public prosecution of Communists or of alleged Communists or their sympathizers is absolutely illegal in this country; the private harassment of them is vicious and indefensible. 2) The professional patriots were in large part shallow opportunists. Look at some of the leading figures: Parnell Thomas, who ended up in jail for embezzling government funds; Joe McCarthy, a man reeking of crowd-pleasing emptiness who drank himself to death a few years after his senatorial censure; and Richard Nixon.

There is also a third theme, not touched here, which needs a film Orwell: the delusions of the then-American Communists and fellow-travelers. Lionel Trilling said of those in the Western intelligentsia who admired the Soviet Union in those days that they believed "the Soviet Union had resolved all social and political contradictions and was well on the way toward realizing the highest possibilities of human life. The facts which refuted this certitude were not hard to come by but the wish to ignore them was resolute . . ."

Idi Amin Dada (Tinc). Barbet Schroeder's documentary about the Ugandan dictator. Amin is self-revealed as ridiculous, as he addresses his cabinet and a medical meeting, but you could hardly tell from this jovial portrait that he is a butcher responsible for tens of thousands of murders. (How engagingly he chuckles when he's reminded of his praise of Hitler.) The only correctives on the sound-track are notes that one demonstration was staged and that the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," which Amin admires, is a notorious fake. Schroeder has said that Amin threatened reprisals on Frenchmen in Uganda if certain cuts were not made in the film. Schroeder doesn't say who forced him to release the result, which is a vile deceptive piece of work.

Slouching Towards America

The Prize of Failure

The hero sails to far exotic shores, returns in triumph with a princess and a prize. This is the archetypal European Quest whose classic formulation is the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece. The theme has minor variations—as when the fleece becomes a Holy Grail—but the center remains: despite the setbacks and the losses he may suffer on the way, the hero brings his treasure-laden Argo back to port. The quest succeeds. Thus when the Renaissance explorers left to seek great riches in the lands beyond horizons on the west, their ultimate success seemed foreordained. And when America was found, it simply was historical fulfillment of an archetypal myth. To certain eyes the continent was El Dorado. Others saw it paradise regained, the locus of the *aetas aurea* that medieval exegetes had learned of in their "Christian Ovid." Either view envisioned realms of gold.

The notion that a brave new world awaited its discoverer, appears as early as the Roman Seneca. The chorus in *Medea* prophesies a second Argo sailing past "the ocean's chains" and into *novos orbes* of majestic size. By this analogy Columbus was to be a second Jason. Ferdinand Columbus was convinced that Seneca had meant his father—as we know from markings in his Latin text. Those who saw America as Eden rediscovered could adduce a better proof: Columbus *said* so. And the theme persisted. Montaigne in his famous essay viewed "Americans" as prelapsorian *bons sauvages*. And though Montaigne found Eden in Brazil, the eye of Europe subsequently focussed on the north. In 1734, Voltaire could specify (without irony) *which* of the United States contained the earthly paradise: "the golden age of which we speak so much . . . has never very like been reality—except in Pennsylvania."

But herein lies the paradox. The dream we call "American" is actually a European

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fantasy, inspired by the Golden Fleece tradition in the fabric of their culture. This is not at all America's *ur*-myth. Success is Jason's fate. Columbus, on the other hand, died poor and in disgrace—and back in Europe.

The American quest is profoundly tragi, its Golden Fleece a winding sheet for Jason drowned. The paradigm is *Moby Dick*. Why does Ahab so relentlessly pursue what is both metaphysically and literally elusive, something far transcending any European sense of "prize"? His crew has harvested the wealth of many whales; but still he perseveres to get the White One. And what are we to understand in Melville's message that the quarry kills the quester? He clearly understood how flagrantly he violated Europe's myth. We know how closely and how often Melville read the *Odyssey*, whose sailor hero voyages past every limit and returns paragonally happy. "*Heureux qui comme Ulysse . . .* " begins the famous sonnet which then cites a second model of success: "that man who won the fleece." And Melville actually suggests that Ahab's ship is something of an anti-Argo. In a book where every character is named portentously, can we ignore the fact the *Pequod*'s cook is called "old Fleece"?

Auden's poem to Melville limns the man no less than his mythology:

> *. . . it was the gale had blown him*
> *Past the Cape Horn of sensible success*
> *Which cries: "this rock is Eden.*
> *Shipwreck here."*

Not even paradise lost, a theme familiar to the European mind—which could conceive of *temps perdu* as either Christian or Proustian. But rather paradise *as* tragedy. Shipwreck in Eden.

Although this may not always be the major theme, it appears throughout American literature—as in Faulkner—in the *basso continuo*. W.J. Slatoff notes this in his study of Faulkner with its emblematic *Quest for Failure*. But what concerns us in this essay is those works of American fiction which clearly and deliberately deny the hero prizes which in Europe were his due. Take the case of Eugene de Rastignac, the typical Balzacian hero, an unscrupulous *arriviste* who succeeds financially as well as socially, and gains *une femme et une fortune*. By contrast, Gatsby, equally unscrupulous, achieves the two, then loses both—and then his life as well. What is more, Fitzgerald consciously presents him as a contrast to the European archetype. As Lionel Trilling pointed out, Gatsby has constructed his estate upon the shores first spied by great explorers' sailors. The pristine site once "pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams."

The fate of the American protagonists consistently dispels and negates European fantasies of Golden Age, success and paradise regained. Not merely in Fitzgerald, whose *Tender is the Night* presents another *arriviste* who rises but to fall. There is also John O'Hara's Julian English in *Appointment in Samara*. This painfully ambitious merchant of the noble Cadillac surrenders in his social quest and kills himself. In *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser gives us young Clyde Griffiths, desperate to achieve both wealth and social recognition but who ends in the electric chair. *The Big Money*, the concluding part of John Dos Passos' *USA* trilogy depicts a glittering war hero who at first aspires to serve society, then tries to conquer it, but ultimately dies defrauded and deluded.

Santayana's only novel *The Last Puritan* (1936) presents the European foil as well as the American failure. His hero Oliver Alden embodies every aspect of American success: high social rank, good looks, great wealth—and football skill. Yet he is unhappy, for the world "had denied him nothing except the animal capacity . . . to hug himself for joy at his private good luck." In contrast, cousin Mario, the European cynic quite unburdened by excessive puritan morality, can savor all the world's delights—and even hope for more. No need to ask who ends up with *une femme et une fortune*. And yet what gives the paradox a new dimension is that all the wealth which comes to Mario is Oliver's, the woman might have been. The European will inherit both (and coolly drop the girl), when his New England cousin is struck by a car in France. Just *after* World War I concludes.

Our theme is hardly limited to eras like the '20s and the '30s. Bellow's Augie March, unlike the Lazarillos and the Felix Krulls of Europe's picaresque tradition, ends his journey unfulfilled. And Augie justifies his failure with an odd analogy: "I may well be a flop . . . Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains. Which didn't prove there was no America." Salinger has chronicled a family of extraordinary children who seemed destined to succeed. But in an early story, Seymour Glass, the best and brightest, "PhD . . . when most Americans are just getting out of high school," kills himself. His suicide haunts everyone in all the later tales. How can they survive if Seymour couldn't? Though he yearns to be a writer, brother Buddy Glass can't even finish college. Not coincidentally, his cherished childhood book was . . . *Gatsby*.

Moby Dick appeared in 1851, *The Old Man and the Sea* a hundred years thereafter. Though placed just off the coast of Cuba, Hemingway's quest for the Big Fish is a tale as typically American as Melville's. For he has a special leitmotiv: his hero's hero is "the great DiMaggio." And the Yankee's star (whose team's name adds an extra irony) is constantly invoked with his "homeric" epithet. Struggling to land the fish, the Old Man tells himself, "I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio, who does all things perfectly." Not only does Hemingway's protagonist not bring the prize to port successfully, but his own hero was destined to become a symbol of all bright hopes faded. As years later Simon and Garfunkel lament, "where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you . . . "

Yet it is also true, that, like their European cousins, early Americans had illusions of a farther shore, a new frontier. An ever-bright horizon beckoned from the west. But plainsmen die and once again frontiers recede beyond the limits of a lifetime's journey. Cooper's Deerslayer takes pride in the fact that while his father lies buried by the sea, he has advanced far inland. And yet he himself dies thinking of the distance still to be achieved: "his gaze seemed fastened on the clouds which hung around the western horizon, reflecting the bright colors and giving form and loveliness to the glorious tints of the American sunset." This is the sort of scene that moved D.H. Lawrence to call the *Leatherstocking Tales* "a kind of yearning myth . . . the myth of America." What then remained to be achieved? The ultimate frontier, of course, our El Dorado, California.

Harry Levin has many perceptive observations on the progress of America's Golden Age myth. After noting that our dollar bill bears an inscription adapted from Virgil's "Messianic" Eclogue, he continues:

> *[The Myth] fitted in with the prospects and bonanzas of the nineteenth-century expansion, moving westward towards California—that state which derives its name so appropriately from an enchanted island . . . in a sequel to the popular romance of* Amadis of Gaul.

Indeed, if the American himself ever imagined earthly paradise, if he ever

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conceived that there was a New World fleece to capture, it would be on the Pacific shore. For here, quite literally, the realms were gold. Edgar Allan Poe describes the '49ers' rush for treasure in his poem *El Dorado*, which begins

> *Gaily bedight,*
> *A gallant knight,*
> *In sunshine and in shadow,*
> *Had journeyed long,*
> *Singing a song,*
> *In search of El Dorado.*

Despite the medieval language of quest, the outcome is once again according to the American version of the myth. The knight will get no gold, will win no grail. At last a "pilgrim shadow" tells him El Dorado *may* exist beyond yet another frontier: the mountains of the moon. But one may well ask why, at a time in American history when so many adventurers were in fact getting so rich so quickly, Poe nonetheless emphasizes the failure and the shadow.

Perhaps because his artist's instinct sensed that California was to be the final veil which separated American delusion from truth. The Pacific was merely the other wall of the prison. And yet it was a dream that died slowly. Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* depicts the exodus from barren Oklahoma towards the promised land of California. At the end of Route 66 it seemed salvation waited and all suffering would cease. The Joad family discuss their destination in Edenic terms: eternal spring, carefree people living in white houses, fruit in great abundance everywhere. As granpa daydreams, "Jus' let me get to California where I can pick me an orange when I want it . . . Gonna get me a whole big bunch of grapes off a bush, or whatever, an' I'm gonna squash 'em on my face an' let 'em run off my chin." But then they cross the border and harsh reality dispels it all. A novel published in the same year as Steinbeck's presents the outlook of those pilgrims who already attained their California destination:

> *They get tired of oranges, even of avocado pears and passion fruit . . . they have been cheated and betrayed. They have slaved and saved for nothing.*

This is Nathanael West (note *nom de plume*), whose *Day of the Locust* was first conceived under the title *The Cheated*.

California is America's "America," and Hollywood the locus of the final phase of its mythology. Countless novels—some still in their authors' typewriters—repeat that Hollywood is Hell-in-Heaven. And the title of Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* has been assimilated into our language as a rhetorical question which epitomizes all American ambition and its destiny to fail. Fitzgerald's final book, *The Last Tycoon* shows Hollywood as graveyard for Balzacian heroes' dreams. Producer Monroe Stahr is literally flying high above his "empire" when he crashes. The author left us his own comments on the mood he wanted to convey when tragedy occurs:

> *After the plane comes down, it may be best to finish the chapter with that fireworks—repeat my own fear when I landed in Los Angeles with the feeling of new worlds to conquer . . .*

Ironically, the writer who so often and so well portrayed American delusion was himself a victim of it. And he died in Hollywood.

Can we explain America's *ur*-myth, the prize of failure? Many critics have attempted to by arguing that Europe's culture still bears traces of the values of the Greeks—where winning was admired, Pindar rhapsodizes gold and Jason gets the fleece. America, by contrast, lacks the notion of "untainted victory" since it was founded solely on the values of the Bible. Thus the "Fall of Jason" demonstrates how deeply we have been imbued with pangs of guilt for Man's First Disobedience. The conclusive explanation may elude us, but the fact remains: the literature of the United States is strewn with wreckage of a thousand Argos.

Hart Crane, who sang Columbus, Melville and the Brooklyn Bridge, poetically epitomized the truth of our infernal paradise:

> *There is no breath of friends and no more shore*
> *Where gold has not been sold and conscience tinned.*

In offering the White Whale as its answer to the Golden Fleece, America not only gave the world a new mythology; it killed the old one. New explorers have dispelled the fragile hope that Edgar Allan Poe imparted to his knight. For even on the mountains of the moon, there is no El Dorado. No one dared assail Neil Armstrong and Apollo Seven's "Argonauts" for bringing back the tragic truth. Melville said it well enough when he complained: "Columbus ended earth's romance."

Erich Segal

Erich Segal is visiting professor of comparative literature at Dartmouth.

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Books Considered

Ezra Pound: The Last Rower A Political Profile by C. David Heymann

(Viking; $10)

Ezra Pound by Donald Davie

(Viking; $6.95, $2.50 paper)

Ezra Pound's penultimate agony was a gradual, inexplicable, voluntary descent into silence. His final agony was a wrenching, terror-filled, never-complete acceptance of it. "I did not enter into silence," he cried bitterly if feebly, "silence captured me," lashing out blindly at the rotting, long since mutilated targets and crudely simplistic—even darkly macabre—explanations that now, in old age, were suddenly no longer of solace. It was as though a path had suddenly looped, and Pound's glance, unprepared and aghast, was directed at the ruins of his life strewn helter-skelter along the way: language ill-used or badly used; the inevitable breakdown that had finally ensued when words were called upon to serve poetry *and* politics simultaneously—contradictory, irreconcilable ends; and the ultimate draining away of that vital, highly-charged, all-pervasive reservoir of conviction and certitude that for so long had energized and catalyzed those antinomic uses of language, seeking to erase their fundamental incompatibility by fashioning them into an unwieldy, magnificent epic poem whose writing would stretch over the course of the poet's lifetime, yielding up for inspection at numinous moments the shifting, flickering contents of his soul, while at the same time shadowing forth the mad design of his splenetic, skewed political vision.

But now his bearing was no longer penetrating, hypnotic, sagacious; he no longer challenged the world with that striking leonine gaze—the triangular red Vandyke and flaming mop of hair of his youth by now gone white and wispy—a gaze in which bottomless hatred of "Jewspapers and worse than Jewspapers," of "Franklin Finkelstein Roosevelt," of "kikes, sheenies, and the oily people" and also a passionate love of the intellect and of language used well "To resuscitate the dead art/ of poetry; to maintain the sublime/ in the old sense" could mingle and co-exist voluptuously and inseparably. His bearing no longer reflected and embodied the role which he had assigned himself: to be the holy scourge of America's backward and uninformed government and masses, the Jeremiah of a new order, the midwife who, as he had once assisted at the birth of a new literary generation—"booming" T.S. Eliot, Hemingway, Joyce and Frost, to name but a few—would now, through his writings, trumpet in a new political and cultural order, a Risorgimento, whose center would be the enduring Mediterranean culture of Italy, and whose leader would be a Mussolini or his successor.

"Where are you living now?" a journalist asked him. "In hell," was his reply. "Which hell?" pressed on the reporter. And Pound, raising his hands to his heart, whispered, "Here, here." But the hell of silence had always been there, waiting, waiting—during all those years when his interminable stream of words, filled with a passionate, driving conviction, poured forth: the volumes of poetry from *A Lume Spento, Mauberley* and *Propertius* to the late, haunting *Cantos;* the increasingly strident and obdurate tracts, from *Social Credit: An Impact* to *Jefferson and/or Mussolini,* devoted to the dubious economics of Social Credit (a modification of the labor theory of value focused narrowly on usury and what it construed to be a radical misuse of money) and the loathsome politics of fascism; the indiscriminate flood of letters penned down the years in his famous, idiosyncratic, ingratiating, almost telegraphic argot or patois; the short-wave radio broadcasts from Rome prior to and during the war, for which he was indicted for treason by an American grand jury, broadcasts zanily obsessed with a paranoid vision of the world as ruled by a sinister cabal of Jews, usurers and their assorted henchmen, underlings and sympathizers; and later, from 1946 to 1958, the year when the indictment for treason was dismissed, the strange circle of old friends, literary admirers and unbalanced political acolytes that gathered around to converse with him during his 12 years of incarceration at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC.

But now, back in Italy, in the summer of 1961, 11 years before his death, the silence had conquered all: words, poetry, propaganda, confidence, certitude, the last shreds of his obdurate self-righteousness. Even if his eyes now outwardly concurred with a visitor's chance remark, from his lips there passed, at best, a sudden clot of sentences or, more likely, a forced monosyllable. Naked before friends and accusers alike, confessing that words had failed him, he spoke of having

> *lived all my life believing that I knew something. And then a strange day came and I realized that I knew nothing, that I knew nothing at all. And so words have become empty of meaning . . .*
>
> *It is something I have come to through suffering. Yes, through an experience of suffering . . .*
>
> *I have come too late to a state of total uncertainty, where I am conscious only of doubt . . .*
>
> *I do not work any more. I do nothing. I fall into lethargy, and I contemplate . . .*
>
> *Everything that I touch, I spoil. I have blundered always.*

And on yet another occasion: "The intention was bad," he admitted in a particularly self-lacerating mood. "That's the trouble—anything I've done has been an accident. Any good has been spoiled by my intentions, the preoccupation with irrelevant and stupid things." And then, with manifest deliberation, he added, "But the worst mistake I made was that stupid, suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism. All along, that spoiled everything." But perhaps the most balanced, incisive, brutal and yet strangely tender assessment of all came from his natural daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, whose mother, Olga Rudge, was the mistress of Pound's middle and later years. "He was losing ground, I now see," she wrote of the war years and the frenzied broadcasts, "losing grip on what most specifically he should have been able to control, his own *words.*" No longer was he *"Lord of his work and master of utterance"* as he had written in Canto 74. "And perhaps he sinsed it," continues Mary, "and the more strongly clung to the utterances of Confucius, because his own tongue was tricking him, running away with him, leading him into excess, away from his pivot, into blind spots."

Poetry *versus* propaganda. "What drives, or what can drive a man interested almost exclusively in the arts, into social theory or into a study of the 'gross material aspects' videlicet economic aspects of the present? What causes the ferocity and bad manners of revolutionaries?" Pound had asked as early as 1933 in an essay, "Murder by Capital," in T.S. Eliot's *Criterion.* "Why should a peace-loving writer of Quaker

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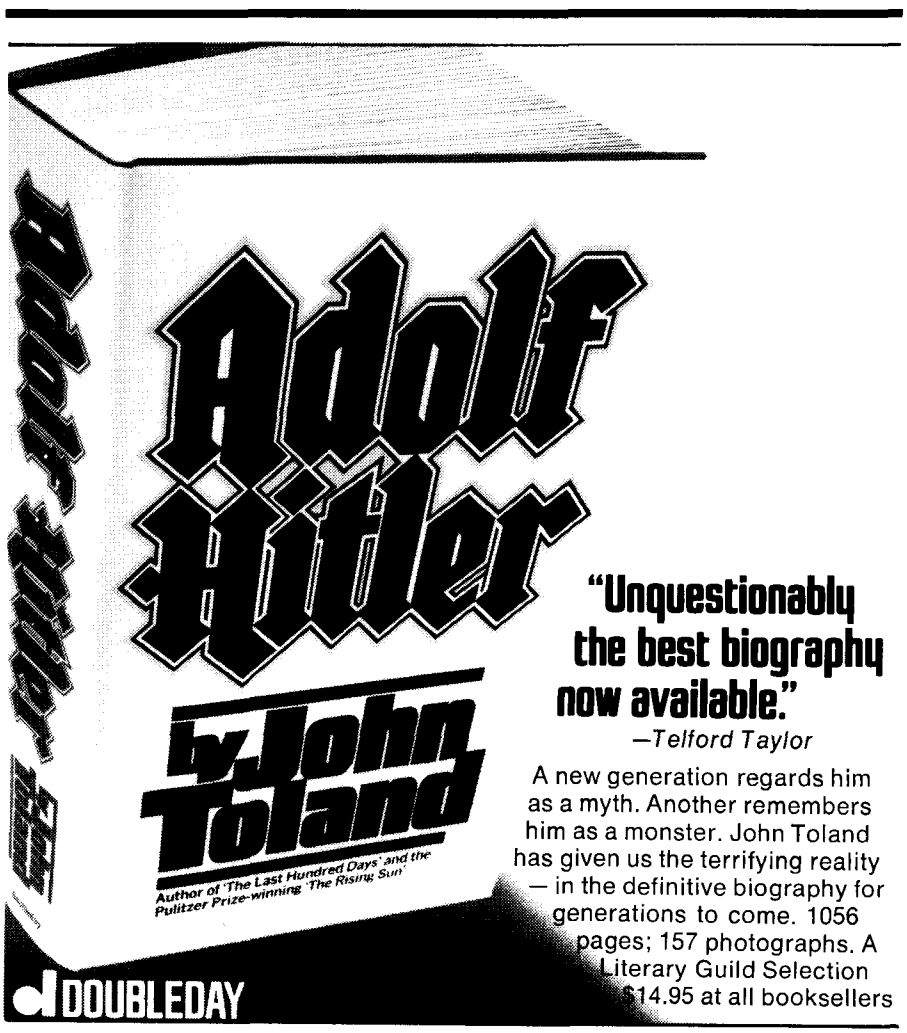
descent be quite ready to shoot certain persons whom he never laid eyes on?" This query forms the background against which any study of Pound as man and artist must proceed. And in the foreground we uncover what may be a law of language generally, a law contravened innumerable times by 20th century artists especially. For it may be that, the further we penetrate into the recesses of the self, the more the artist calls on the nuances of language to scrutinize the hidden interiorities of the soul, raptly sinking into a passionate self-absorption so complete as to extend almost far enough to threaten the limits of sanity, the more desperately are we in need of a sheet-anchor—be it a belief, a creed, a view of history or economics however simplistic—to tether us to outer reality. The more Pound turned inward, the more compulsive was his need to cling to some outrageously falsified portrait of reality, simplistic, even cartoon-like, as unencumbered by detail or subtlety as his inner explorations were laden with them. If many of the *Cantos* show us the increasing complexity of this inner world, other *Cantos*, the political and economic writings and the verbal propaganda show us the pitiful impoverishment of his view of the outer world.

As a result, the breach between these inner and outer realms widened perilously; the abyss of mental aberration and encroaching silence became ever more real as language was tugged in two directions. Scrutinizing the nuances of his inner world, he could find words, as many of *The Cantos* so deftly demonstrate, to fix a feeling, to frame a landscape, to draw an unexpected connection between distant or dissimilar events, to savor the filigreed complexity of things. But the greater his immersion in this interior world, the less he seemed capable of making language work for him by delivering a minimally accurate semblance of the ordinary real world. "Kike," "usurer," "democracy"—these now became key words capable of yielding up as if by reflex, at the slightest invocation, a massive crackpot propaganda through which the outer world was filtered. This becomes clearer by altering our terms. Pound fancied himself a man of action, a participant in the political arena; his original claim for *The Cantos* was for an epic poem "with a will to action." But for the true man of action, generally speaking, the complexity of the outer world moves to the forefront as an arena for considered action, while detached introspection and a never-ending fascination with the minutiae of experience are, if present at all, of secondary importance. Pound inverts the case, reverses the situation. With Pound the complex reality of the man of action recedes to the flat plane of caricature, of stereotype drawn from the gutter of common invective and communal hatred. Reality for Pound becomes first an uncontrollable phantasmagoria of hatred, then linguistic dementia, finally silence. This is what Stephen Spender meant when he opined that Pound had "allowed his scrupulous poet's rhetoric of the study of 'minute particulars' to be overwhelmed by his secret yearning for a heroic public rhetoric. Sensibility has surrendered to will."

Although C. David Heymann's self-proclaimed "major" biography of Pound does not deliberately scant exploration of this dilemma, all attempts at analysis quickly deliquesce into a sea of facts and a swamp of befuddled organization. Part of the difficulty arises from two conflicting conceptions of what kind of biography this was to have been, two conceptions entertained simultaneously by Heymann from the start and never reconciled. Subtitled "A Political Profile," we might reasonably have expected a work that delves into all of Pound's political writings, considered chronologically, together with a lengthy excursion into their theoretical underpinnings. Inexplicably, Heymann steers clear almost entirely of theory, sending us off to the footnotes for Hugh Kenner's explanation of so basic a fact as the "A+B theorem," or citing, again in the footnotes, a book by William M. Chace, to elucidate another point of theory. The answer to this mistaken selectivity appears to be that for Heymann the term "political" refers almost exclusively to those of Pound's wartime activities which were meticulously culled and stitched together by the FBI into a case for treason. Afforded access for the first time to the FBI files on Pound, Heymann overwhelms us with a mass of undigested information. He cannot resist dangling before us the full legal text of indictments, affidavits, court petitions—even the contents of one page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(straight out of *Police Gazette*) from an inventory sheet, prepared by an FBI agent, of materials seized from Pound's residence: "Two pencils and a black (Swan) fountain pen and ten sheets of paper bearing the known hand-writing and handprinting in ink of Ezra Pound." But then, rising from this sea of facts, a second and contradictory plan for the biography emerges. The book's "Preface" declares Heymann's intention to write "a multi-dimensional perspective of the poet," and to this end—abandoning the single perspective of politics—Heymann, in the first 50 pages or so, precedes his windfall of FBI data with a capsule *literary* biography. The upshot is a breathless gallop to touch every literary base: to intrude a sentence or two on every member of Pound's wide circle of acquaintances; to offer a capsule summary—often imprecise because of its pinched brevity—of every literary movement or fashion; to cram in every anecdote or jot of literary gossip, salient or otherwise. What emerges is an ill-considered fusion of two books, clotted and shapeless, neither satisfactory, both verging on critical irrelevance.

By contrast, *Ezra Pound*, by Donald Davie, despite its slim canvas of 120 pages, is virtually a masterpiece of impressive speculation, a work of unrelenting cerebration. Its central, revolutionary thesis transforms our image of Pound from that of a simple, robust, iconoclastic revolutionary into a complex figure straddling, often unsuccessfully, two centuries and a multitude of literary traditions: "a man who carried more nineteenth-century baggage than any comparably gifted contemporary among writers in English," and who, if "a master and founding father of twentieth-century modernism in the arts," attained this eminence "not by virtue of having exploded, and persuaded us to reject, nineteenth-century pretensions." In other words, David forcibly and convincingly argues that

> *everywhere we turn so long as we have some scruples about evidence, we encounter . . . not a revolutionary or iconoclast but a sometimes militant conservative . . . Indeed, it is possible to argue that Pound was at bottom an Edwardian man of letters like Edmund Gosse or George Saintsbury, and that the provocative oddities of his later poetry and his later opinions reflect merely the increasingly desperate straits to which a man formed in that milieu was compelled, as political and social developments destroyed any possibility of that kind of milieu being reconstituted. Certainly Pound's Edwardianism, if we may call it that, was something that he never wholly outgrew. And so when he died, there disappeared not only the last surviving specimen of one sort of twentieth-century modernist but also, odd as it must seem, the last survivor of a still older breed, formed by the century before.*

These desperate straits further reflect the progressive disintegration of an Edwardian—indeed Arnoldian—view of "a Europe that spoke Latin and its Romance derivatives, including English as the most remote and partial of those derivatives." The swerve into Italian fascism thus becomes understandable and inevitable, as does the pursuit of "the compound language of *The Cantos*," and, in another context, the fervent belief that "if America is ever to produce or become a noble civilization, it can do so only by modeling itself on European precedents, precedents that are ultimately or originally Greek and Roman." What Davie portrays so brilliantly are hitherto unnoticed lines of stress in Pound's complex personality, invisible fractures which lead, in the end, to dysfunction and silence.

"The surest way . . . of judging the work of an author who ventures into a new field," wrote T.S. Eliot in the pages of this magazine, "is to trace if we can the growth of his interests and their relations among each other. . . . A man may be led, by the connections of things themselves, far from his starting point. . . . Where there is no vital connection, the man may be a brilliant virtuoso, but is probably nothing more." Undeniably Pound *is* more, rendering both poignant and understandable his final destiny of silence.

Alan Weinblatt

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Coming:

The Poems of Helen Chasin

An Essay by John Frederick Nims

T.S. Eliot: The Longer Poems by Derek Traversi

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $10, $3.95 paper)

The purpose of this commentary on *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* is to give T.S. Eliot's reputation a boost on the not unarguable theory that what has gone down in the literary marketplace must, in the fullness of time, go up. It is not a bad idea. Eliot's reputation has suffered a good deal at the hands of the Charlie McCarthys of the Agitprop school of criticism who prefer chanting sanctimonious platitudes to reading poetry. Meanwhile, poetry itself has moved away from the allusive, esthetically distanced mode of *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* toward the mode of personal lyric. For many readers today Eliot must seem as remote as Milton. Probably more so, since the story of the Fall is bound to be more familiar than the Tarot pack or the history of Little Gidding.

Yet the revolution in which Eliot was the dominant figure remains the most important turning point in English and American literature since Wordsworth. We are still living in its shadow, even if we take it for granted.

Traversi's commentary grew out of a class in English at Swarthmore. Evidently teaching Eliot meant going through his poems section by section and line by line explaining the hard images and pointing out their relations to each other. It is the kind of commentary that would be useful for an undergraduate class in *The Divine Comedy*, and if this is what contemporary students need for T.S. Eliot, so be it. A critical commentary, however, is a servant to its text. It should be tactful, unobtrusive and willing to let the text speak for itself whenever possible. Traversi knows this. He is modest. He likes Eliot's poetry. And he does not use Eliot as the occasion to spin arcane theories about the nature of art or the psychology of creation. On the other hand he is relentlessly determined to explicate. There are surprisingly few extended quotations from Eliot. Those that do appear are sandwiched between heavy blankets of moralizing comment, endlessly qualified ("Perhaps something of this is what Eliot had partly in mind") and sprinkled with italics in an effort to recapture the tone of the lecture hall. The introductory chapter on the ideas behind *The Waste Land* may just possibly be the

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murkiest treatment of the subject currently in print. The chapters dealing with the individual poems are somewhat better, but only the sections on *East Coker* and *Little Gidding* can be described as relatively free of the circumambient fog.

Traversi makes two general points. The first is that Eliot is a poet of experience rather than an apologist for Christianity. The poems are the record of a search for meaning rather than religious or social tracts. This is undoubtedly correct. It is so obvious that none but the invincibly ignorant could possibly deny it. But since the ignorance of the invincibly ignorant is by definition invincible, Traversi's efforts, while laudable, are probably futile.

The second point is more problematic. Traversi regards *The Waste Land, Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* as the essential elements in Eliot's career, forming a continuous "development" from the earliest to the latest poem. He does not treat the dramas, the criticism (except for occasional citations), or the recently published facsimile of *The Waste Land*, which shows Ezra Pound's extensive manuscript revisions. This is a little like playing tennis with the net down. Even if we accept it, the effect is to force the commentary into a procrustean bed. Each of the poems is seen thematically, as a movement from despair to something more positive—in the later poems, Christian affirmation. While this is an acceptable description of the moods on which the major poems begin and end, it is reductive. It makes the poems seem a little like spiritual melodramas, with the reader breathlessly asking, "Will Eliot make it this time, or won't he?"

Eliot is not an Aristotelian artist. He does not write in terms of beginnings, middles and ends. The attitudes of his speakers are constantly changing. Consequently, his poetry is by turns associative, ambivalent, paradoxical, incantatory, prosaic and allusive. The result is a transcript of rapidly fluctuating states of awareness, and should be experienced in this way by the reader. Much of it is not intended to have a rational explanation—it is not, after all, a code that the reader is supposed to decipher but a mosaic of suggestive hints highlighted by moments of insight that suggest the possibility of order in the apparent flux. This kind of art resists continuous translation into prose paraphrase, and Traversi's commentary sometimes reads like a contest between the poem and the critical method in which both sides lose.

When *The Waste Land* was published in 1922 Eliot was hailed as the laureate of the decline of Western civilization, a poetic Oswald Spengler. He was more than that. His poetry records, brilliantly and honestly, a lonely struggle to discover coherence in a turbulent, chaotic world. The world has not improved noticeably since the '20s. Perhaps Traversi has chosen a good time to insist that Eliot still has important things to say. The dominant image of *Little Gidding* is fire. Part of the poem takes place during an air raid on London. A German bomber appears as a dark bird which is later transformed into the Dove of Pentecost. In the same way, the destructive fire of World War II is transformed, by an act of anguished faith, into the fire of love:

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.

Whatever its flaws, *T.S. Eliot: The Longer Poems* is a reminder that poetry can be more than confession and that the fire which Eliot confronted is still the typical element of our century.

O.B. Hardison, Jr.

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Modern Japanese Writers And the Nature Of Literature by Makoto Ueda

(Stanford University Press; $12.50)

Compared to the Chinese, whom they so often emulated, the Japanese have generally been poor philosophers. They have, however, craved order and formula—Michael Novak's *The Joy of Sports* wisely attributes Japan's love of baseball to her love of that sport's orderliness and its exemplification of something distinctively Japanese, "personal honor"—and have even gone so far as to divide and endlessly subdivide their writers, past and present, in myriad schools, waves, traditions. One can pass through a prestigious American university's English department deluged with courses divided into periods (Americans are fetishistic when it comes to centuries) and only occasionally bored by recitations of what makes "naturalism," "romanticism," "neo-realism," what-have-you. The Japanese think in eras, in spans of several centuries or the decades of this emperor's reign, or that, but they adore literary classifications by *type*: they even devote scholarly and popular magazines to pushing one or another brand of fiction writing on the worshipful public as not just good or better but as best. Don't bother a Japanese literature student with Kawabata's birth and death dates; entrance him with your understanding of Kawabata's theoretical and critical writings and of which writers he liked and disliked, and why, and how all that related to his love of tame birds, while Shiga Naoya liked wild ones—and why, and don't bother too much with the when.

Professor Ueda, who chairs the department of Asian languages at Stanford, has undertaken, and by and large successfully accomplished, a task at once tremendously useful to those already conversant with modern Japanese literature and basically useless to those who aren't. He has attempted to grasp the essence of Japan's eight most important modern writers—Natsume Sōseki, Nagai Kafū, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Shiga Naoya, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Dazai Osamu, Kawabata Yasunari and Mishima Yukio—and to tell not only what they wrote, and why, but what they thought and wrote about writing, and how. But the telling of so much in so few pages has necesarily involved compression, and even for one whose training has been in precisely those authors whom he so lovingly dissects, the full appreciation of Ueda's book requires two readings. If you don't already know Kafu's *A Strange Tale from East of the River* you are left frustrated by the brief description of it, and if once you step into that particular literary stream you are unlikely to come out for years, which will make the Ueda book an item strangely suspended.

Never mind; most books *on* literature are bores and succeed only, if they succeed at all, in driving the reader to the well, where, it is fervently to be hoped, he will dive in and sample the literature itself. Professor Ueda's insightful series of analyses offer much more than that: they partake, of course, of the traditional Japanese fascination with classification, and they also illuminate the material classified.

Two examples must suffice; Ueda on Dazai Osamu and Mishima Yukio, who,

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owing to his spectacular suicide in 1970, drew the attention of a great number of Americans, at least of Americans who read.

Dazai was a suicide too, in 1948, on his fifth try, that time jumping with his current mistress into a murky river. He was a decadent, and a tender-minded, soft-hearted, perverse sot, shy and aloof, a man who felt that "a writer should be ashamed of himself to give even one word of explanation or apology regarding his own work." And so he gave clues to his literary theories almost exclusively in his works of fiction; but since, like so many of Japan's greatest writers, he exercised his talents through autobiographical works, the task of piecing together those theories is not complicated, especially when guided by a teacher as astute as Ueda. *Regret*: that, to Dazai, expresses the very spirit of the modern age, of modern literature. Dazai's sense of despair, realized in morbid stories told with sublime elegance sometimes tinged with wicked humor, motivated an enormous outpouring of stories and novels, and inspired in his contemporaries sometimes agitated literary hostility. As Ueda puts it, "Dazai's works are balm for some and poison for others. All literature is like that to a certain extent; Dazai's case is an extreme."

Mishima Yukio has been studied extensively of late, nowhere more intelligently than in Ueda's concluding chapter, which justifies this author's classification of Mishima as less a novelist than a thinker who expressed himself not only through his writings but also through his entire way of life. Mishima despised Dazai's sickly conception of society, in fact despised his own sickly physique, which early sense of inferiority impelled him to the sometimes ludicrous extremes of bodybuilding that occupied much of his time. To write a "masculine" literature—that was why Mishima said he developed a masculine body. In but 40 pages Ueda gives substance to a superlative array of insights, adding greatly to the reader's understanding of that most talented and most sorely missed of Japan's younger modern writers, putting into a coherent and plausible context an enormous body of work. Even in their suicides the difference between Mishima and Dazai is crucial: Dazai sank down into the rushing waters of a fetid river, going out of this life in a symbolic reenactment of the way his main characters sank into decadence; Mishima, convinced that he had at last created a physique beautiful enough to be admired in death, slit the belly of his perfectly honed 45-year-old body, after which, following just that sort of ritual so incomprehensible to Dazai, Mishima's head was severed from his body by a loyal retainer.

These are details not recited by Ueda, but they are much more comprehensible thanks to Ueda's first-rate study.

David Brudnoy

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Reconsideration

The New Critics

It was when I read J. Hillis Miller's survey of last year's books in literary criticism (in the November 29, 1975 issue of *The New Republic*) that I realized it was time to consider again, in such new light as he throws, the contributions of the New Criticism—as represented, say, by John Crowe Ransom in *The World's Body* (1938) and *The New Criticism* (1941), by Allen Tate in *On the Limits of Poetry* (1948) and *The Forlorn Demon* (1953), and by Cleanth Brooks in *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947). I have been told that my book, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (1956), helped bury the New Critics 20 years ago; if so, Miller's essay prompts me to try to exhume them. For I had hoped that post-New-Critical movements, while sophisticating their epistemology and resisting their mystifications, would build upon their insights. But Miller's essay reminds us how thoroughly all vestiges of that old New Criticism have been swept away by the new wave of our newer criticism, dominated by recent continental influences. As he shows us, recent critical fashions in the academy have sprung forth from assumptions that altogether preclude those of the New Criticism, thereby denying us their methods of literary analysis and the considerable fruits which such methods could bear. If our newer new criticisms go as Miller sees them going, then all continuity with earlier criticism in our century is severed, and we must unsay some rich decades of critical sayings. So I thought it worth looking again at what was being recanted and measuring the cost of that recantation.

What seems, from Miller's alien perspective, most central and unifying in the varied writers we (sometimes unfairly) have lumped together as New Critics is their insistence on the linguistic presence of (and *in*) the poem. Because they attribute to each poem the power to generate its verbal form, they see poems as entities uniquely privileged to struggle with and overcome the (otherwise) universal character of language, which, for them as for the Structuralists, tends to degenerate into empty signs. This claim to the victory of verbal presence in poems—and, through it, the refounding of meaning in words—is the common conclusion of Ransom's licensing of a self-generating ontology (in "Poetry: A Note in Ontology," the key essay in *The World's Body*, and "Wanted: An Ontological Critic," the all-resolving final chapter of *The New Criticism*), of Tate's notions—at once hybrid and synthetic—of "tension" and "proximate incarnations" (in "Tension in Poetry" from *On the Limits of Poetry* and "The Symbolic Imagination" from *The Forlorn Demon*), and of Brooks' paradoxical justification of poetic irony (throughout *The Well Wrought Urn*).

I have suggested what may sound surprising: that these New Critics hold certain notions about the workings of language in common with the Structuralists, who represent a dominating force in that continentally influenced criticism championed by Miller. But I also suggested, as a qualification to this agreement, that critics like Ransom, Tate and Brooks argue for the emptiness of verbal signifiers only while insisting upon exempting poetry from such general linguistic incapacities, building the very function of poetry upon this exemption. That is to say, they see the poem as generating a verbal form which reveals itself in its power to fill its signifiers with meanings—those very

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signifiers which, in their habitual use, have previously lost all meaning. Despite this crucial qualification, it remains important for us to see the similarities between the New Critical and the Structuralist conception of normal language behavior.

One may see I.A. Richards functioning for these New-Critical claims much as Ferdinand de Saussure functioned from Structuralism, with each providing a rudimentary linguistic analysis which becomes the basis for the criticism that followed. The New Critics derive from Richards' dualistic opposition between sign and thing in his argument for the referentiality of science and the non-referentiality of poetry, much as the Structuralist needs Saussure's opposition between signifier and signified to define discourse as the manifold dispositions of empty signifiers. The difference, of course, is that New Critics, anti-positivists all, tended to be less faithful to Richards' dichotomy than Structuralists have proved to be to Saussure's. The New-Critical contribution consists in their struggle to convert Richards' linguistic reductionism into a theory that can account for the newly embodied world they find in poems, even if it is but a world of words. For *these* words are full, and their fullness is one with their meaning, though a meaning founded (and found) only in their form. Ransom, for example, freely grants the arbitrariness of language in its sensory dimension as sound—grants it as freely as any Structuralist would—but he sees the poem as parading that arbitrariness with a self-consciousness that makes it the necessary precondition for the poem's presence—as well as for the presence and fullness of its meaning.

Here, then, is the parting of the ways between the New Criticism and the Structuralism with which it seems to share a common view about the general workings of language. Though both may agree that there is an absence of proper signifieds in language generally, the New Critic insists on allowing for the presence in poems of a discourse that generates and fills itself with its own signifieds. As esthetic elitists, they see the debased democracy of *écriture* being forced to yield the privilege that each true poem earns for itself as a closed verbal system. If humanists these days view the world of words as one emptied of meaning just as the world itself has been emptied of God, these humanists see that world as being forced to sustain—though it is belied by—a word now made flesh by man as poet, who creates a verbal identity within a linguistic system of ineluctable differences. It is their holding open this opportunity to create a verbal presence that has left them vulnerable to the monolithic positivism of spirit that has succeeded them.

I press this comparison between the New Criticism and Structuralism because of the extent to which—as Miller reminds us in his survey—all academic criticism that "counts" today (which is to say, all criticism that is currently fashionable in the academy) is continentally derived, the dominant continental modes being assumed to be Structuralist and Post-Structuralist. Indeed, in the Miller essay itself it seems enough to dismiss the sensitive study of George Herbert by Helen Vendler (the first book Miller mentions) by praising her as "the most distinguished contemporary practitioner of the New Critical tradition of 'close reading.'" Since such an attachment means that she is likely to be "implicitly hostile to continental criticism or indifferent to it" (and is "mostly innocent, whether innocently, or not, of any continental tinge"), it is clearly time, after the single sentence mentioning the book, for Miller to move past it toward what he sees as theoretically more consequential (which is to say, theoretically more fashionable) works, which he can treat at his leisure. About the Herbert volume we are left with the implication, splendid work, though quaint.

What accounts for the current domination of the critical scene by the continental ideas we associate with the terms "Structuralism" and "Post-Structuralism" is their antagonism to verbal and poetic presence, which is the very heart of New-Critical doctrine. Wary of presence as mythical delusion, they succumb to metaphysical emptiness and would have it sanction a verbal emptiness that not even poetic powers can replenish. Seeing all our books authorized by the original Book authored by God, the Structuralist finds the belief in the word to die with the death of our belief in the Creator whose Word gave all words meaning: when God evacuates our world, meaning evacuates our language. All wordly signifieds follow the Transcendental Signified out of our realm, the empty shell of Word and words. Such are the existentialist assumptions behind the Structuralist negations, the latter being the linguistic consequences of "the disappearance of God" (to borrow the title of one of Miller's books).

The work of Paul de Man, to whose importance Miller testifies in his essay, continually emphasizes the desperate inability of our language, since the early Romantics, to bridge the gap that separates the word from its would-be references in the world. This hopeless distance between signifier and signified is a reflection of the chasm between the interiority of the human subject and the deadly indifference of the object out there on its own. But, de Man to the contrary notwithstanding, the New Critic can claim that a dualistic thematic like his, for all it denies to language and for all the existential failures it visits upon the poet as human subject, need not preclude the poem from creating a monistic verbal structure that contains such denials within its expressive unity. On the one hand for de Man, and for the Structuralist and Phenomenological view he in part inherits, man's existential failure to remake a now alien nature must be echoed by the failure of the poem to remake its language—again a linguistic analysis that masks the theorist's existential anguish. So for him the possibility of poetic union in the created symbol dissolves into the dualism of a hopeless allegory. Poetic absence, with God's, overwhelms us.

Like the New Critic, de Man has inherited the shambles left by the collapse of faith of which Matthew Arnold despaired as he vainly sought to relate poetry to religion. Coming from Arnold, we can go either of two ways: we can view poetry as a human triumph, the creation of verbal meaning in a blank universe to serve as a visionary substitute for a defunct religion, or we can—in our negation—extend our faithlessness, the blankness of our universe, to poetry as well as to our religion. In the latter case, we tend, like de Man, to reject the alternative, affirmative claim as a mystification arising from nostalgia and from metaphysical deprivation. But, retrograde as I am, I am concerned about the loss of the filled and centered word, so that I must recall again the virtues that have now been demythologized, to lament the small gains given us in return for all we have given up.

It must be conceded that the New Critics habitually reified their poetic experiences into an absolute, if mythic, object. What we may see today as a fictional claim about the poem's integral self they uncritically asserted with epistemological naïveté. But their lesson for us today is their unquestioning willingness, consistent with their (and our) critical tradition, to treat the poem

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as a creative centering of words. It is true also that, in echoing the humanist's insistence on man's obligation to re-fill word and world with meaning—*his* meaning as a lower-case, still creative, creature—the New Critic may be seen, especially from the Structuralist perspective, as falling victim to his own mythologizing powers, which will not face up to the emptiness of his universe. Of course, a critic's defense of the power of the poet, as fiction-maker, to fill his world of words can be made without his turning it into a metaphysical defense of the world's fullness. Must such a critic be charged with invoking the myth of metaphysical presence if he claims no more than a constructed verbal presence?

If belief in the poet's power to find embodiment in the world is a myth, it has been, for the critical tradition in the West from its beginnings, the necessary fiction that has permitted more than two millennia of our greatest poems to speak to us. Few critical schools in our history have done more than the New Critics did to give them voice. Thanks in large part to these critics—but before them as well—the poems have been *there*, speaking as they do, as if there is a presence in them. They make their own case for presence, and it is out of no mere nostalgia that we continue to value it in them. For presence is present tense, and while we live we must not allow ourselves to be reasoned out of it.

It may well be that the Post-Structuralist mood is the most appropriate one to account for the revolutionary art produced in our culture these last decades: an anti-esthetic for an anti-art. The philosophical assault on man's symbols may both mirror and justify what man has been of late doing with them—or refusing to do with them. It would hardly be a flattering comment to suggest that, if Post-Structuralism turns out to be a theoretical partner of recent activities in the arts, they deserve one another. And I trust it is more than just a reactionary comment to suggest that the recent wars on metaphysics and art alike hardly produce worthy successors to the tradition they would destroy. In reconsidering the New Criticism here, I mean to stimulate us to reconsider at the same time the brilliant and extensive artistic repertoire which it was created to serve. These works in our tradition still stand, demanding the traditional esthetic to account for them. It was this esthetic of which the New Criticism represented a climactically productive moment.

I have made more of a school than is perhaps warranted by the several writers whom Miller treats jointly and favorably. Miller admits considerable differences among them, although he goes on to claim their common importance in light of the attention they pay to directions in continental theory, whether sympathetically or not. Certainly the exclusively extended treatment he accords Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman and Harold Bloom suggests the embarrassing fact that the only school represented by these critics is Yale University. Yet there is what I have called a Post-Structuralist mood, if not a unified doctrine, in the work of these critics, and it is a mood that is now attracting academic critics throughout the country. That we should find a tentative alliance built on a mood, a temperamental rather than an ideological affinity, attests to the existential rather than the linguistic or methodological motive behind their varied writings.

Even Bloom's recent books can be viewed as making common cause with the others, unlikely as that may at first seem. Bloom licenses the critic to use the present critical occasion to undo and replace the primacy of the historically prior piece of writing (as its author had sought to use his poetic occasion to displace *his* precursor). Any potential presence of the poem that confronts the critic is thus dispersed into what Derrida would term "traces" of the burdensome past, now exploded by the present critic's self-gratifying ego. So the critic, indulging his narcissistic moment as the latest in a sequence of such moments indulged by the poets whom he deceives us into believing to be his subjects, tries to win his competition with his predecessor-poet, substituting his presence for that of the poem which, thus transformed, recedes as an unrecognizable point of origin. The critic supplants his precursor-father, remaking his work into his own. This self-conscious usurpation by the critic of the primary role of the literary work is another version of the Post-Structuralist's reduction of that work to the common domain of *écriture*, which equalizes all discourse and de-privileges the poem, denying its pretense to presence.

It would seem to be this radical reorientation of the role of the critic and the role of the poem as it spins out of our general discursive habits that characterizes the continental mood which Miller, probably accurately, sees as currently most influential. And it is in light of this tendency that the New Critics seem obsolete with their traditional sense of the poem as the critic's object. As we are reminded by Miller of the place of Yale in history's vengeful conspiracy to "de-center" the poem, we may muse ironically about the fact that Yale was not too long ago the equally well-armed bastion of another all-dominating movement—the New Criticism now so severely declared outmoded, one fashion undone by another. Let me compound the irony: if Bloom's theory, so different from and yet finally in tune with some continental theorizing, legitimizes and indeed issues a summons to literary patricide, it is appropriate, after all, that his generation of Yale critics make this place for themselves by annihilating the preceding generation of Yale critics—and with an intensity and exclusiveness equal to theirs. In its consequences for our culture, however, the act is a negative one, an enactment of the murder of the past which modern society through its art has generally been practicing. The New Criticism reminds us that we can de-center past objects and can undo their presence only by obliterating all entities, ours among them. The murder of our fathers leads not to the assertion, but to the denial, of ourselves.

Murray Krieger

Murray Krieger is University Professor of English at the University of California at Irvine.

Correspondence

Reaganist Translucence

To the editors:

I am writing as a lifelong Democrat, Carter-Mondale supporter and longtime reader of John Osborne's White House column to say that I am bemused by his reference in the September 4th issue (*TNR*, "White House Watch: Why Dole") to what he labeled a "diabolically clever example of Reaganist distortion." The lines he quoted as falling within this description called for the achievement of liberty under law and a just peace; praised Solzhenitsyn for warning against un-

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ilateral concessions as part of détente; urged that we not take from those who do not have freedom the hope of one day achieving it; and inveighed against secret agreements.

It is a valid commentary on how far liberals have travelled in the past 10 years that men who advance these views can be called right wing kooks by a responsible liberal publication. Why should liberals have difficulties with these formulations? Indeed, he does not attack any of them except the criticism of secret agreements, where I agree with his qualifications.

Of course the Ford people accepted the Reagan language. How could they not? What bothers me is that these views were offered by conservatives, and criticized by Osborne as a liberal. Is he against the views, or against those who advanced them? If only the latter, shouldn't he have made that clear, and shouldn't *TNR* be asking why it is left to right wingers to enunciate publicly the bedrock on which American foreign policy should be based? In practice, of course, Kissingerian pragmatism is desirable, but pragmatism without a core of principle is doomed to go down to defeat before the highly principled pragmatism of the enemies of freedom.

Are you not concerned any longer about political freedom anywhere except in this country?

Allen Taylor
Washington, DC

In reply:

I was against the use of acceptable language for unacceptable purposes—in this instance, for purposes of unacknowledged and concealed indictment of Ford-Kissinger policy, in language that people like Mr. Taylor would be naïve enough to take at face value. I didn't say it was the language of "right wing kooks;" it was language devised by Reagan people to quell and satisfy the kooks while beguiling the Taylors of this world. "Reaganist deception" would have been better wording that "Reaganist distortion." I and other editors of this magazine are indeed "concerned . . . about political freedom" everywhere, but I'll bet Mr. Taylor quivers with approval when he reads or hears that "the US can't be the world's policeman."

John Osborne

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Time to be Positive?

To the editors:

After reading *TRB* (Aug. 7 & 14) and *Trooping to Plains* and *The Efficiency Expert* (Aug. 21 & 28), I seriously wondered if I shouldn't vote for "good ol' Jerry" after all. This, in spite of the fact that I'm a Democrat and voted for Jimmy Carter in the Ohio primary. Your mistrust, your suspicions and criticisms (with few pluses for the man) are infectious. I wonder how many people, after reading your magazine, have doubts about voting for Carter.

Anyway, you're doing a good job of campaigning for Jerry Ford.

I wonder: are you really closet conservatives?

Evelyn McQuaide
Tiffin, Ohio

P.S. A mixture of positive with negative is a good idea. *Time* does it.

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1220 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

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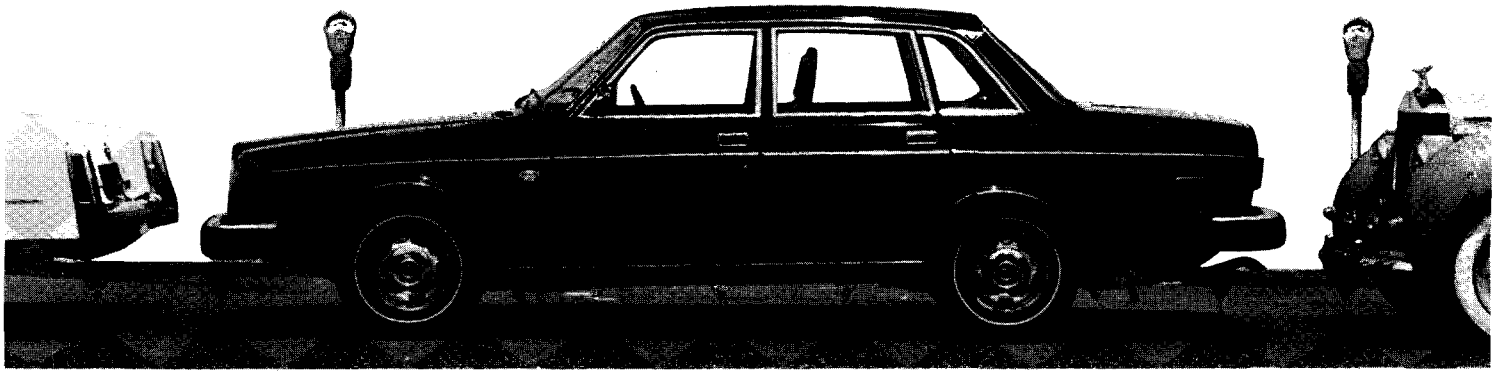
We sell a car that costs a lot of Money but doesn't look like It. Volvo.



When you buy a Volvo, you're not paying for a lot of obvious status symbols. You're paying for safety built in style. For things like hidden roll bars that protect passengers in case of collision up to 60 m.p.h. And you're paying for Volvo's famed durability that keeps it running and running and running with hardly a temperamental moment. And for Volvo's famous orthopedically designed seating; the exquisite comfort, the uncramped head and leg room and wrap around visibility that, again, sets Volvo apart.

In fact, one test drive removes any doubts about Volvo's price.

If you've given a lot of thought to what you need in a car, come see us. We'll answer your questions, explain our Preferred Customer Service and offer you a test drive.

Then you won't think it's a lot of money at all.

Volvo of Washington

LPS

4800 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Telephone: 363-4800

Ask about leasing your new Volvo.

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